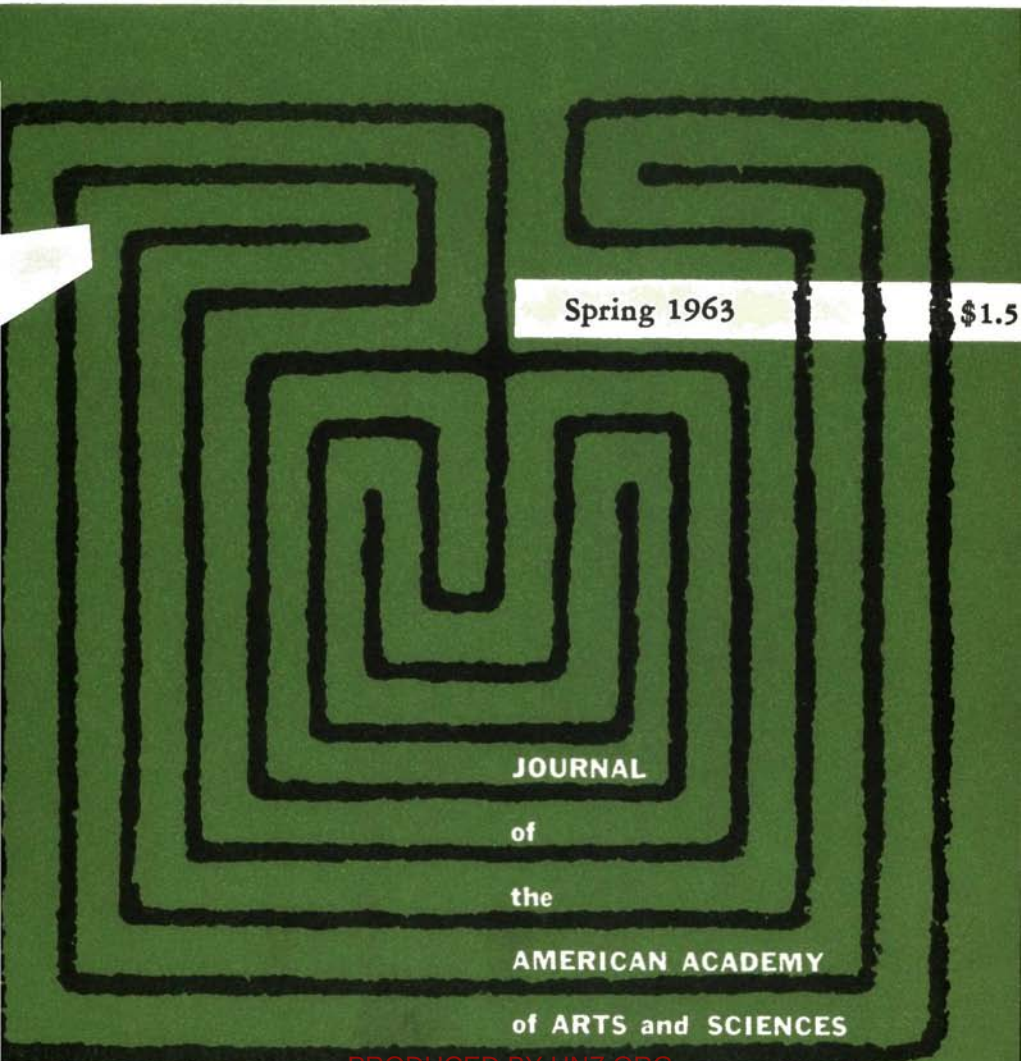
DÆDALUS

Perspectives on the Novel

Peter Brooks
Brewster Ghiselin
Albert J. Guerard
Robert Kiely
Lawrence Kohlberg
Simon O. Lesser
Harry Levin
David Littlejohn
Andrew Lytle
Thomas Moser
Claire Rosenfield
David L. Stevenson



Spring 1963 $1.5

JOURNAL
of
the
AMERICAN ACADEMY
of ARTS and SCIENCES

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BOARD OF EDITORS

Raymond Aron, John E. Burchard, Clarence Faust,
Karl von Frisch, Etienne Gilson, Clark Kerr,
R. M. MacIver, Archibald MacLeish, Paul B. Sears,
Harlow Shapley, Paul Tillich, George Wald

Gerald Holton, *Editor of the Academy*
Stephen R. Graubard, *Editor of Dædalus*
Geno A. Ballotti, *Managing Editor*
Frances H. Ramsdell, *Assistant Editor*
Diana Morton, *Editorial Assistant*
Catharine Wilder, *Publications Assistant*

EDITORIAL OFFICE: *Dædalus*, the Journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 38 Kirkland Street, Harvard University, Cambridge 38, Massachusetts. All communications to the Editor should be sent to that address.

SUBSCRIPTION OFFICE: American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 280 Newton Street, Brookline Station, Boston 46, Massachusetts.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: *Dædalus* is published quarterly. Subscription rate in the United States, $5.50 a year; foreign $6.00; single copies (regular current issues), $1.50 domestic, $1.75 foreign; for a back issue, add $0.25. Subscription orders should be sent to the Subscription Office.

Published by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences

Printed in the United States of America

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 12-30299

Second-class postage paid at Richmond, Virginia

Copyright © 1963 by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

DÆDALUS

Journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences

Contents

197 ALBERT J. GUERARD
Introduction to the Issue "Perspectives on the Novel"

THE NOVEL TODAY

206 HARRY LEVIN
Apogee and Aftermath of the Novel

220 ROBERT KIELY
The Craft of Despondency—The Traditional Novelists

238 DAVID L. STEVENSON
The Activists

250 DAVID LITTLEJOHN
The Anti-realists

265 PETER BROOKS
In the Laboratory of the Novel

281 ANDREW LYTLE
Impressionism, The Ego, and The First Person

INTENTION AND UNCONSCIOUS CREATION IN THE NOVEL

297 BREWSTER GHISELIN
Automatism, Intention, and Autonomy in the Novelist's Production

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

312 THOMAS MOSER
Towards *The Good Soldier*—Discovery of a Sexual Theme

326 CLAIRE ROSENFIELD
The Shadow Within:
The Conscious and Unconscious Use of the "Double"

345 LAWRENCE KOHLBERG
Psychological Analysis and Literary Forms:
A Study of the Doubles in Dostoevsky

363 SIMON O. LESSER
The Role of Unconscious Understanding in Flaubert and Dostoevsky

383 Notes on Contributors

385 Recent Issues

SPRING 1963

ISSUED AS VOL. 92, NO. 2, OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF
THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Introduction to the Issue "Perspectives on the Novel"

THE WORD *perspectives* may appear to do very large service in bridging the gap between the first and second parts of this issue. For whereas the first part (an examination of certain contemporary trends in the novel) takes up a number of books published within the last year, three of the five contributors to the second part (which involves analysis of the creative process) find Dostoevsky central to their argument. The discrepancy might seem to confirm the common suspicion that theory lags behind creation, even a century behind. A more valid response would insist that Dostoevsky is the most "modern" of psychological novelists. Psychologizing critic and literary psychiatrist alike go back to him still for their most striking examples of divers compulsions. His great dark shadow looms over and still dominates the genre.

The purpose of this issue was to conduct two separate but related enquiries. In the first, six literary critics discuss significant groupings and trends in the contemporary novel, rather than pronounce upon the novel's demise. None of the contributors believes the novel is dying, though several are concerned with the crisis in communication, and with the barriers between the serious novel and its potential reader. The second enquiry brings literary and psychiatric or psychoanalytic minds together over a problem of major interest: the relative roles of conscious intention and unconscious creation in the writing of a novel.

Any proposed survey of *The Novel Today* must recognize the necessity of gross omissions. No apology is made for omitting the journalistic novel which may yet be doing a real public service (such as *Advise and Consent* or *Fail Safe!*) nor for omitting the routine commercial novel using techniques that seemed fresh a century ago. I. F. Stone and Irving Wallace and Hermann Wouk and James

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Michener may be of interest to the sociologist and to the historian of mass culture, but not to the serious literary or psychological mind. Our real regret concerns the number of excellent writers, and even the number of nationalities, not represented in these pages. But the omissions were necessary. A theoretical discussion of trends could not become a comprehensive survey of talents.

The leading article seemed an inevitable choice. Pages from the final chapter of Harry Levin's study of classic French realism, *The Gates of Horn*, were admirably suited to introduce the novel of the 1960's, when French "anti-novelists," while professing to demolish the genre, push the rendering of reality to undreamt-of extremes. An anticipated article on the European novel of ideas had to be abandoned. The other five contributors were assigned areas of the novel, schools in a sense, which seemed particularly important. In each instance an attempt was made to choose a critic who was both sympathetic and detached. Thereafter the choice of writers to be discussed, and of course of emphasis, was left entirely to the critic.

Robert Kiely, discussing the traditional craftsman, proposes an interesting conjunction of Evelyn Waugh, Graham Greene, and Katherine Anne Porter—all three affected by the Christian tradition, all three giving refined and controlled pictures of degradation. Another critic might have elected Cozzens, Moravia, and C. P. Snow; or Iris Murdoch, Ivy Compton-Burnett, and Angus Wilson. The challenge accepted by David Stevenson was to define the aims and achievements of a number of writers—here called "The Activists"—who have been particularly vigorous in the last decade. The most influential of these writers has been Saul Bellow. To chart his affinities with Bernard Malamud and Herbert Gold and Philip Roth—or, going beyond David Stevenson's limits, to relate their "activism" and love of life to the frenzies of Jack Kerouac and William Burroughs on the left, or to the attention to intense experience of James Baldwin and Ralph Ellison on the right—is to try to seize literary history in the making, an exciting task. The repudiations of mediocre living by the "activists" are healthy. Their larger and more suspect influence may turn out, in the end, to be on language.

In "The Anti-realists," David Littlejohn considers a number of writers who, though little read by the general public, may well indicate one of the major roads the novel is likely to take. Many educated people who tolerate or welcome radical experiment in the other arts, in painting and music and drama and poetry, still resent innovating fiction. Yet why should the novel alone be forbidden dis-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tortion and dissonance? The movement, though it continues to be unpopular, has its occasional accepted "classics," and David Littlejohn proposes a pattern of generations. Joyce and Kafka were succeeded by Djuna Barnes, Malcolm Lowry, Nathanael West, and Henry Miller; and to some degree William Faulkner. They in turn have been succeeded by the "pure" anti-realists Samuel Beckett, Jorge Luis Borges, John Hawkes, and Joseph Heller, and by the "marginal" anti-realists Lawrence Durrell, William Golding, J. P. Donleavy, and Vladimir Nabokov. These last names remind us that black humor and willful distortion may find some acceptance in the general reader. The anti-realists generally find conventional clichés and conventional realisms unendurable. Nearly all of them are impatient with the old well-made novel, and share Durrell's impulse to "crack forms."

Some of this impatience is at once recognizable in the French *new novelist* or *anti-novelist*. But Peter Brooks's careful and scholarly analysis suggests that these writers are more concerned with a true version of reality than with exciting *fictional* discoveries; more concerned with doing justice to existence than with manipulating the reader's emotions. The usual impulse of a French *avant-garde* is to repudiate, on philosophical or intellectualist grounds, the findings of the schematizing intellect. This *avant-garde* is no exception. The philosophically minded may go beyond Peter Brooks's article to ponder the act of a Claude Simon reproducing in Southern France, no doubt on good theoretical grounds, the very rhythms and tensions and outrages of Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha. The contrast in any event is an interesting one—between the unintellectual and imaginative American and English anti-realists, and the highly talented French anti-novelists, who seem to remain good *lycéens* solving a problem.

The largest assignment of all was given Andrew Lytle, an assignment no doubt sensibly declined—no less than to sum up the achievement of the "Impressionists," by which was meant everyone from Faulkner and his Southern associates to the afore-mentioned Claude Simon. What had Faulkner in common with Malcolm Lowry and he with Graham Greene and he in turn with both Warren and Conrad? Instead Lytle chose to discuss—in the serious, uncompromising language of the professional—some of the moral and technical problems the impressionist who uses the first person method must face. How shall the novelist respond to Percy Lubbock's classic dichotomy of the panoramic (historical, expository)

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

method and the scenic (dramatic) method? How shall he keep the advantages of a controlling central intelligence? And how shall the novelist use the creative opportunities of first-person narration without succumbing to its opportunities for slackness? Many writers and critics have greater faith in the method than Lytle shows, and feel that the ironies of the "unreliable" narrator can be tightly controlled ironies. As for the assessment and grouping of talents, it must wait for another occasion—the balanced assessment not only of Faulkner, Tate, Warren, Styron, Eudora Welty, and Flannery O'Connor, but of Andrew Lytle himself.

These are but a few of the issues raised by our six critics as they contemplate the novel at this moment of change, of movement away from the old modes of social realism and toward poetry, fantasy, myth. It might be well to ask why serious writers of unquestionable talent have either needed to escape present time and place (as has Golding), or needed to recompose reality radically (as has Borges), or to play with both values and forms (as has Nabokov), or been impelled more and more in the direction of the grotesque (as was, most notably, Faulkner himself). Do the bland monotonies of our society or its unendurable pressures demand an escape into some radically different atmospheres?

It would also be well to consider again the problem for the serious novelist, traditional or experimental, of finding a public at all. In a recent issue of *Dædalus* (Winter 1963), Dan Lacy affirmed that there is no reason to believe that any trade books "of any conceivable merit fail of publication." "On the contrary," Mr. Lacy continues, "an examination of any considerable part of the more than 2,000 new novels published every year suggests not only that all with any perceptible merit are published, but that hundreds appear without that justification." This statement (except for its final clause) is, alas, untrue, as any teacher of writing knows, or any writer with a number of novelist friends. A more accurate assessment was given by a very distinguished New York publisher in a letter to one of my former students. He spoke of his own and his associates' enthusiasm for this young man's novel, but remarked on the virtual impossibility of selling a first novel of literary value on its merits unless some adventitious interest was lent by the subject. He then went on to say that he could accept and publish the book only if X and Y (two important writers and "opinion makers") would make favorable statements which could be used in publicity.

This is but to conclude that the "plight" of the novel today is less

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a matter of serious talent, which seems more abundant than ever, than of publishing procedures and difficulties.

The symposium on *Intention and Unconscious Creation in the Novel* raises problems at once larger and more elusive. The perspectives here sought are no longer on contemporary trends only, but on the mysteries of novel-writing at any time, and on the often unhistorical processes of the unconscious. A further aim was to help bridge a wasteful gap between kindred spirits, too often divided by uninformed disdain. Many fascinating analyses of literary works appear in psychological and psychoanalytic journals, but literary people rarely read these. These articles might be helpful to the literary critic or scholar as he wrestles with the problem of intention. The professional psychologist more than repays this neglect in kind, and often assumes the literary man's speculations can only be frivolous and amateur.

In the present symposium—the foundation, one hopes, for a larger one—two psychologists with more than usual literary sensitivity (Simon Lesser, Lawrence Kohlberg) confront two young literary critics with more than usual awareness of psychological process (Thomas Moser, Claire Rosenfield). Brewster Ghiselin, the poet and editor of the well-known anthology *The Creative Process*, serves as a point of junction between the two groups. It should be noted that all five—and this is not always true of psychologists, or even always true of literary men—are lovers of the novel and admirers of the writers they discuss. There is no denigrative intent behind their analyses of the artist's psychic economy. But the concept of unconscious creation—the assumption that at least part of the novelist's achievement is not only unplanned but is effected against his will—is taken for granted by all five.

To what extent is the artist, the novelist specifically, aware of the work his hands are about? To what extent is his creation the result of intention, planning, will, and to what extent of accident and wayward dream? The traditional literary view was that the scholar-critic should discover—through biography, through letters and diaries and outlines, through historical research into linguistic and moral conventions—the formulable intentions of the artist. *What did he set out to do? Did he do what he set out to do?* And, as an occasional humane corollary, *Was what he set out to do worthwhile?* Even before the turn of the century, André Gide shrewdly suggested that the writer could hardly discover his intentions until he had

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

completed his work; and perhaps not even then. The three classic questions have stood up badly under the twentieth century's anatomizing, though for many professors of literature the issue remained unfocused or dormant until the famous W. K. Wimsatt-Monroe Beardsley essay on "The Intentional Fallacy" in the Summer 1946 issue of *The Sewanee Review* (published in their volume *The Verbal Icon*).

It became abundantly clear that a work of art could not be judged or even interpreted fully according to its manifest intentions. Not what was intended, but what was written, meant and mattered. Many studies have shown how wide of the mark, and luckily so, the artist's aim may be. Again and again a novel's happiest inventions may flash into being, unpremeditated and even unsought. Studies of word-choice and metaphor may reveal meanings, judgments, sympathies and hostilities far different from those intended. Thus even such an affirmative statement of faith as Wordsworth's *The Prelude* reveals itself on close scrutiny to be a deeply negative statement harboring fears of failure and deprivation. Among novelists, Conrad especially—intending an affirmative attitude toward love, and intending, at other times, a hard conservative ethic—reveals a fairly strong misogyny; or, again, reveals considerable sympathy for the outlaw and the anarchic.

All this will seem obvious to many, and most of all to the psychiatric or psychonalytic critic. The idea that artists fully and in detail intend all their effects is nevertheless a comforting one that dies hard. Thus one of the most interesting of recent theorists of fiction, Wayne Booth, in *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, suddenly falls back into the old intentional stance. The question raised by Edmund Wilson was whether James himself could not have been self-deceived about the governess in *The Turn of the Screw*—to which Booth all angrily responds, "Once we decide that against their conscious aims authors work their wonders, no critical hypothesis, however far from the author's provable intentions inside the work or out, can be refuted; this in turn means nothing can be proved, since no evidence is more relevant than any other." True enough—nothing can be *proved*. But what great novelist has not dreamt dreams his citizen consciousness would repudiate? There are many novelists, Conrad again notably, in whom are combined a large area of wayward dream and unconscious content *and* a conscious and expert manipulation, through technique and rhetoric, of the reader's sympathies and values. Some of the best subjective novelists draw on vast funds of unpredicted

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

fantasy and unconscious invention which they then subdue and put to conscious, skilful use.

There are healthy differences of approach in the essays to follow. Brewster Ghiselin's "Automatism, Intention, and Autonomy in the Novelist's Production" states the important issues in general terms, and notes that the successful novel will combine both conscious and unconscious processes, the voluntary and the spontaneous. Ghiselin has scrutinized in detail the accounts by artists of their own creation, and he returns more than once to the dangers—to the possibly inhibiting force—of excessive preconception. Much formal research on creativity has become routinized, as new disciplines do; thus infinitely varied and complex processes regularly find themselves reduced to four "phases" or "stages." Ghiselin's statement of *configurative action*—and his plea to attend to "all the subjective activity concomitant with those structural developments, all the flow of feeling, imagery and thought which attends them"—offers a healthy corrective.

Thomas Moser's article on Ford Madox Ford raises an interesting psycho-literary problem. How can a novelist work toward conscious understanding of a human situation he has, all unconsciously, been dramatizing in novel after novel? What process of introspection, accident or literary imitation could lead Ford to define—and hence assess ironically—a psycho-sexual drama in which his own sympathies had been involved? To what extent did Ford, in *The Good Soldier*, reach a clear understanding of Dowell's sexual failure and complicity in his wife's behavior, or of Dowell's sympathic identification with Ashburnham? The pure literary historian might say that Moser minimized the influence of Conrad, who in *Chance* came at last to treat such a theme ironically. The uncorrupted psychoanalytic critic would ask for more Freudian insistence on jealousy experienced bisexually. Moser's article more than vindicates the value of studying a novelist's early work and the way attitudes and conceptions change from book to book.

Simon Lesser's "The Role of Unconscious Understanding in Flaubert and Dostoevsky" follows very usefully upon Moser's article. The argument, to be sure—with its use of such words as "honesty" and "understanding" for unconscious processes—will doubtless distress some literary minds. Other literary historians may resist the notion that Flaubert was too unaware of Charles Bovary's unawareness. But any open mind should find the essay challenging. Lesser argues that Flaubert, dreading to face his own latent homosexuality,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

defended himself from *even an unconscious understanding* of a "normal jealousy experienced bisexually." Hence he failed to understand the full implications of the triangular situations dramatized in *Madame Bovary.* By contrast Dostoevsky (with his deep urge to confess) showed a rich unconscious knowledge of "the kind of normal jealousy in which a tender feeling for the male rival plays a part"; showed, even, a "comprehensive" knowledge of "practically all the components of jealousy Freud discusses." Dostoevsky would no doubt, if he were privileged to read these lines, angrily repudiate them. But he would be repudiating, Simon Lesser suggests, his own rich honesty. Lesser's striking conclusion is that the novelist—precisely because he "can at once confess and conceal" and "can displace his own forbidden tendencies upon the characters he creates"—can achieve greater honesty than is possible in any other form of writing or activity: "he of all people can tell the truth—disclose rather than hide the terrible desires which haunt the fringes of his consciousness."

The objective of this symposium—to juxtapose open, informed minds from two disciplines—is nowhere better achieved than in the final articles by Claire Rosenfield and Lawrence Kohlberg. Each had started with a slightly different subject—Dr. Rosenfield to explore conscious and unconscious use of myth generally, Dr. Kohlberg to discuss Dostoevsky's ideology in relation to his unconscious drives. But each, without knowledge of the other, gravitated toward the crucial literary and psychological phenomenon of the Double. No term is more loosely used by casual critics of modern literature. As almost any character can become a Christ-figure or Devil-archetype, so almost any can become a Double. The present articles restore sanity through concrete reference to literary tradition and to clinical and psychoanalytic evidence.

The psycho-literary tradition, as summed up by Dr. Rosenfield, is perhaps wider than is usually supposed. Dr. Rosenfield's knowledge of literature, psychology, and myth helps her discern rewardingly some of the borderlines between conscious and unconscious exploitation of the theme. Obviously it is impossible for most modern novelists to recover the innocence of the average novelist writing in the mid-nineteenth century. What novelist today has not heard of "doubles"? How can he—by descending, in Conrad's words, into the "lonely region of stress and strife"—still manage to recover psychologically meaningful images in a fresh, creative way?

Literary critics often regard the Dostoevskyan Double as but a

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

convenient symbolic fiction, a useful myth for dramatizing sharp moral and personal conflicts, or for conveying paranoid anxieties in a fictionally satisfying way. Dr. Kohlberg, as a scientist, is concerned with the literal truth or falsity of Dostoevsky's conceptions, and not only with their general effectiveness. What do Doubles mean? Otto Rank had described the short novel *The Double* as a classic portrayal of the paranoid state, and this was presumably very close to Dostoevsky's own understanding of his story. But Dr. Kohlberg affirms, with reference to clinical experience, that the "autoscopic syndrome," the experience of an "hallucinatory duplicate of the self," has no relationship to paranoid states. Moreover, the paranoid would not, Lesser says, have the kind of self-awareness of a splitting-off that Stavrogin, for instance, shows in *The Possessed.* Dr. Kohlberg goes on to remark that Dostoevsky's consciously "split" characters do present classical examples of the obsessive-compulsive character.

The present essay is but the first part of an analysis to be continued elsewhere, with appropriate statistical tables. Dr. Kohlberg has used the so-called "Q Technique" to bring some objectivity to the analysis of the single case. Factor analysis was undertaken to define types of the Double in relation to Dostoevsky's own personality. In that later essay, Dr. Kohlberg will discuss the meaning of the Doubles in *Crime and Punishment, The Brothers Karamazov, The Possessed,* and *The Idiot;* and the relationship of these Doubles to moral ideology, to psychosexual situation, and to literary structure.

Albert J. Guerard

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

HARRY LEVIN

Apogee and Aftermath of the Novel

THE NINETEENTH CENTURY, by retroactive contrast with all the disasters that mankind has subsequently faced or still faces, looms behind us as a citadel of comfort and stability, harboring the accumulations of culture and fostering the self-expressions of individualism. If the defects of its safety were dullness and smugness, if its official tone often took on a philistine edge, then its sensitive minds could freely and brilliantly object. Sin and guilt were perennial for Baudelaire, and crimes of violence were all the more monstrous when they were inhibited by the time-spirit of Ennui.

> *Si le viol, le poison, le poignard, l'incendie*
> N'ont pas encore brodé de leurs plaisants dessins
> Le canevas banal de nos piteux destins,
> C'est que notre âme, hélas! n'est pas assez hardie.

Such is the poet's warning to his other self, the hypocritical reader, which prefaces *Flowers of Evil,* and which was first published in the *Revue des deux mondes* during 1855. Two years later Flaubert gave him occasion to recall his artistic term, and to transpose the image from tapestry to painting. In his percipient review of *Madame Bovary,* Baudelaire speaks of the wager that the novelist has made with himself, as it were: the primary condition is to pick "*un canevas banal*" and to lay on "a sinewy, nervous, subtle, exact style." Life is the easel for the banal canvas of our pitiful destinies; art is what it should be, the brush and the palette; and the reviewer elaborates

This essay is abridged from the final chapter of *The Gates of Horn: A Study of Five French Realists,* to be published in the spring of 1963 by the Oxford University Press, with whose permission it is printed here.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the paradox, which no one could have appreciated better than he, of vulgar subject-matter treated with stylistic elegance. This was a traditional premise for the mock-epic, with its implicit ironies. But the realistic method held further consequences which, as Ernst Cassirer perceived, "were able to overcome the conventional dualism between the poetic and the prosaic spheres." The classicists and the romanticists were alike in their esthetic assumption that subjects had to be beautiful or wonderful in order to be worthy of serious treatment. On the contrary, the realists believed that in the arts, as in the sciences, everything ought to be studied that elicited human interest.

When Balzac's artist, Théodore de Sommervieux, paints his picture of the drapery shop in *The Sign of the Cat and Racket,* the shopkeeper is not amused. "Is it so very amusing to see a painting of what you meet with every day in our street?" asks M. Guillaume. His naive reaction is typically bourgeois, and Balzac himself does not altogether deserve it. Like his painter, he was concerned with what happens in our street, and to some extent with what happens every day. To a greater extent, he was concerned with the exceptional happening. To make the ordinary interesting, he made it extraordinary; he embellished his metropolis by exaggerating its crimes and romances; in this respect, they do not greatly diverge from the *faits divers* of sensational journalism; but in context we may classify him, with Dickens and Gogol, as a romantic realist. Theirs was a normal stage of transition between romanticism, with its sense of fantasy, and what might strictly be called quotidian realism, with its notation of the commonplace. Behind the romantics lay revolution and empire, and along with their tarnished watchwords a more eventful notion of reality, whose dying horn was unforgettably sounded by Stendhal. The canvas of current events seemed banal by the mid-century, perhaps more banal than the actual situation warranted; for, though the Revolution of 1848 erupted through the streets of Flaubert's Paris, it is deliberately evaded by his unheroic Frédéric Moreau. Here and now is everyday occurrence; then and there—in Carthage? Alexandria?—was grandiose adventure. Through the course of a single book, *Ulysses,* in parallel lines which never meet, James Joyce would poise the grandeur of the past against the triviality of the present. Like his master, Flaubert, he would construct a monument to banality by utilizing the utmost resources of artistry.

The names that are ineluctably associated with the name of Nat-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

uralism are those of Edmond and Jules de Goncourt. In their resounding preface to their most influential novel, *Germinie Lacerteux*, they laid down a principle of progression for future novelists, novel readers, and even novel characters: *le droit au roman*. Accordingly, as fiction has developed, it has widened its purview, until it has become the most capacious of genres; and newer aspects of experience, whenever they have been recognized as such, gradually yet continually, have been encompassed by the expanding medium. To a large degree, this has been a matter of social representation, and decisively so when the emphasis shifted from the aristocracy to the bourgeoisie. In their manifesto, the Goncourts demanded that the common people be accorded their right to the novel: that is to say, their recognition within the novel—we need not assume that they would care to read such novels, any more than that *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was addressed to a Negro audience. Zola, if not the Goncourts, met that demand during the course of his comprehensive undertaking. The following generation, the first to be heard in the twentieth century, looking toward a full spread of the democratic franchise, brought forth such wholly proletarian novelists as Maxim Gorki and Martin Andersen Nexø.

Though it might now be taken for granted that every class had a voice, there were other elements of society which struggled toward expression: minorities heretofore unrepresented in literature, races on the point of becoming vocal, regions newly opened to psychophysical exploration, taboos being lifted by changes in custom or taste. Extending its conquests over a wider and wider domain, fiction keeps on looking for worlds to conquer. Sooner or later it hopes to get everything down on paper and into print, to approximate a one-to-one correspondence between language and actuality. Each emergent writer stakes out and exploits his own terrain in the area of the unwritten. The objective of Henry Miller, "the recording of all that which is omitted in books," does not differ in kind from the formula of Cervantes. But since so many books have accumulated meanwhile, later additions to the record have become increasingly specialized. Since the theme of sex has been hedged about by convention or censorship until quite recently, it has remained—so Norman Mailer states in an interview—"perhaps the last frontier of the novel which has not been exhausted by nineteenth- and twentieth-century novelists." In England, where realism and its congeners were distrusted as importations from France, a native school was known to mid-Victorians as the Sensation Novelists. Whether the sensation

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

is wilfully sought or was inadvertently created, the epithet seems more widely appropriate.

When an admirer of Mr. Miller declares that he "has given us the last *frisson*," the reassuring implication is that we have lived through all the shocks and surprises likely to come our way. No frontiers are left, everything has been recorded, and there is really nothing more to say. We have indeed been reaching limits, limits of expression if not of experience; for times continue to change, and neo-realists do their pedestrian duty in keeping up with them. The well-meaning epigones of naturalism—Romain Rolland, Roger Martin du Gard, Georges Duhamel, Jules Romains—have at least preserved the intimate annals of the Third Republic through their meandering *romans-fleuve*. Naturalism still claims an annual godchild when the Prix Goncourt is awarded, and our popular novels have standardized those techniques which the realists fought for and suffered over. When stories in *The New Yorker* invite our concern for the most trivial details in the least significant lives, when J. D. Salinger accompanies his characters into the bathroom and pauses there to itemize the contents of the family medicine-chest, we may not have experienced the last shudder, but we have attained a definitive yawn. We need not sigh for new privacies to invade. We have come a long way, for better or for worse, since Diderot praised Richardson for the rendition of "all possible reality." Not that the whole of reality is, by nature, exhaustible; but the quantitative approach to it is, by definition, limited. Hence we seem to have run through that cycle of possibilities, and to be due for some sort of qualitative change.

In 1891 Zola's disciple, Paul Alexis, responding to a much discussed questionnaire on literary trends, sent a telegram reading: "Naturalism not dead. Letter follows." The oracle proved to be more or less correct; making up in inertia for what it lost in momentum, the naturalistic movement has survived as a quasi-official tradition, and served its turn as a target for forthcoming -isms. Among these latter, the most pyrotechnical manifestation was that of *surréalisme*. Whether we accept it at face value as super-realism or share the doubts that would construe it as sub-realism, it was unambiguous in its anti-realism. Although their pyrotechnics produced less light than heat and less heat than noise, the Surrealists were serious in their efforts to revive and exalt the latent imaginative strain: the visionary, the oneiric, the phantasmagorical currents that ran underground through the nineteenth century seeking escape from its ex-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ternal realities. André Breton, in his manifesto of 1924, called for an "absolute nonconformism." That was not merely an impractical gesture; it was an unrealizable contradiction. Absolute conformity may be conceivable, however regrettable; nonconformity could hardly be other than relative, since—like liberty, or realism itself—it can only flout certain sanctions by observing others. *Surréalisme* was most meaningful in its refusal to conform with *le réalisme.*

But the cyclic pattern, whereby the *avant-garde* captured the establishment over previous generations, can no longer be said to prevail. Instead, the neo-naturalists sustain a rear-guard action, reinforced by defectors from the insurgent coteries of the nineteen-twenties. The situation has been stabilized by the supply and demand of the literary market. Standard products of later novelists, applying smoothly conventional techniques to mildly novel subjects, regularly head the best-seller lists. In pursuit of their Balzacian aim—"to compete with the civil registry"—they have populated sphere after sphere. With Zolaesque enterprise they have covered territory, exposed problems, and worked up the tricks of the various trades. They go on contributing, not to the novelistic craft, but to the common stock of factual observations and human documents. "The American desire for the real has created a journalistic sort of novel which has a *thing* excitement, a glamor of *process:* it specializes in information," writes Saul Bellow. ". . . It merely satisfies the reader's demand for knowledge." Precisely; and though that satisfaction is by no means unworthy, it can be better served by more literal sources of information. Fiction is bound to lose out in its competition with fact. The merest newspaper holds the advantage of authority over the novel of reportage, which combines watered-down fact with water-logged fiction. A first-hand reminiscence of concentration camps, such as David Rousset's, is bound to be far more impressive than any fictitious approximation.

These considerations may throw some light on the predominance of observation over imagination in, among so many others today, Jean-Paul Sartre and his followers. Our concern for a matter-of-fact authenticity, which turns the more outgoing novelists into reporters, confirms the more introspective in their natural bent, and drives them back upon the facts of their respective autobiographies. "All serious work in fiction is autobiographical," according to Thomas Wolfe, whose word may be a weather vane if not a touchstone. Unquestionably, there has been a mounting trend toward self-scrutiny; the author has come out of his Flaubertian hiding place and offered

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

himself as his own fullest case-history. Hence Gide gave us many *récits,* though only one *roman,* and Proust's one finished novel turned out to be the most intensive of all exercises in the first person singular. Only by focusing upon himself could the novelist look beneath the habitual surfaces of realism—and Proust, rejecting the label, would probably have welcomed the metaphorical overtones of Ortega's prefix, "infra-realism." The Proustian analysis, as Ramon Fernandez was quick to observe, shifted the center of gravity from the characters in a novel to the mind of the novelist. He could be assumed to be developing his ego at the expense of his dramatis personae. Speaking for the newer school, Natalie Sarraute argues shrewdly that this has been a temporary displacement which would scarcely do for other novelists than Proust, and that even the characters he has taken apart are mentally reassembled into classical types by the reader.

Madame Sarraute's collection of essays bears the warning title, *L'Ere du soupçon.* For her the relation between writer and reader seems marked by suspicion, rather than by that willing suspension of disbelief which once united them in mutual trust, and in a triadic identification with the leading character. Subjectivism could not profitably be carried beyond the involvements of the Proustian *moi.* After a generation of commitments to disappointing causes, once again—as with the apolitical generation of Flaubert—the striving is for detachment. Technically, it goes beyond all the precedents for dissolving characterization into sequences of discrete impressions. Though Edouard Dujardin is credited with the invention of internal monologue, French writers have not developed it so fully as Joyce or Faulkner, while Sartre has contended plausibly that its rendering of the so-called stream-of-consciousness is more of a rhetorical convention than a psychological reality. Properly speaking, it is with point of view rather than with center of consciousness that our contemporary objectivists have been experimenting, since their mode of presentation is visual rather than cognitive, and their focus is transposed as sharply and suddenly as if the organ of apprehension were literally the lens of a camera. This may well complete the tendency of the novelist to disappear behind his creation. "The demise of the narrator is the death of the novel," Wolfgang Kayser has predicted.

Other critics, more interested in morale than in form, have been struck less by the withdrawal of the narrator than by the eclipse of the hero. In so far as heroism meant warlike prowess, this decline may be an index of ideological progress, which was already ob-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

servable in the transition from Corneille to Racine. Not that the wars are all over, unhappily. But the military image has been shrinking, ever since Fabrice del Dongo's misadventure at the turning-point of Waterloo, which left potential heroes unemployed and ready to compromise in their civilian careers, like Eugène de Rastignac in *The Human Comedy*. The ruling personage was the bourgeois rampant, incarnate in such anti-heroes as Birotteau or Homais. Meanwhile the proletarian underdog has been acquiring dignity, if not stature, participating with Zola's Macquarts in the large collectivities of mine or farm—or the army, for it seemed to some that heroic values might be recaptured on an anonymous scale. This has offered one answer to the restless anxieties of a Malraux reiterating, "It is difficult to be a man." Such difficulties constitute the stuff of tragedy, especially when they are overcome or heroically resisted, as they so notably were in *Man's Fate*. But all too frequently twentieth-century literature has had to record a total surrender to them, a relinquishment of the humane to the inhuman or of the virile to the perverse. Thus Jean Genet's *Our Lady of the Flowers* reads curiously like a homosexual burlesque of *The Red and the Black*.

Franz Kafka was fascinated by an account of Balzac's famous walking-stick, which was reported to have borne the motto: "I break every obstacle." For himself the relationship with things was reversed, he ruefully commented; every obstacle broke him. He could not have more succinctly exemplified the difference between his heroes and Balzac's, or between the paralytic rhythm of Proust and Joyce and many of their contemporaries and the dynamic tempo of their nineteenth-century forerunners. This deceleration was by no means a deterioration, since it provided compensating opportunities for reflection, inwardness, and depth. Moreover, it combined with formal developments to promote an esthetic ideal, and to secure the standing of the novel as a fine art. In the case of Proust, the novelist coalesces with the protagonist, who ends by rising from his supine position in order to personify the artist. Zola, in describing what he regarded as Flaubert's naturalism, conceded a crucial point about his own: "Inevitably, the novelist kills the heroes off, if he recognizes only the ordinary course of common existence." But if he is acute enough to grasp the meaning of this homely substance, and enough of an artist to preserve and convey it, then he may be a hero for the nonce in his own right.

"All possible fields for the novel have been so often cropped, as

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the farmers say, that nobody will be able to get much from any of them unless he is a cultivator of very rare ability." This bit of rustic wisdom is culled from an editorial on "The Decline of the Novel," which appeared in *The Nation* during 1868, arguing—somewhat *pro domo*—that an increasing sociological emphasis would end by turning the function of the novel over to the daily and weekly press. The prophecy could not have been worse timed. Henry James was just beginning his career; Tolstoy was completing *War and Peace;* indeed, it would be hard to think of a date when more of the world's great novelists were active. When we think of all that has happened to fiction since, and of the similar prophecies that circulate today, perhaps we should feel encouraged to disregard them. The *Nation* article failed to forsee that the very cropping of obvious fields might provide a special incentive for cultivators of rare ability. Yet it did point out an inherent weakness of that incipient naturalism which now, after nearly a hundred years, has revealed many signs of attenuation and possible exhaustion. So clairvoyant an observer as Ortega y Gasset noted the possibility when he first read Proust, and his *Notes on the Novel* are significantly coupled with his essay on *The Dehumanization of Art.* The diagnosis has been widely and loudly echoed in recent years, most impressively by novelists themselves. Thus Alberto Moravia, in an interview, frankly declares that Proust and Joyce have killed off the novel "as we knew it in the nineteenth century."

The saving clause almost restores the situation that has been abandoned, inasmuch as it is in the nature of the novel to outdistance its antecedents. The virtuosity of the nineteen-twenties seems to have carried this impetus to its *ne plus ultra*—or, at least, its point of diminishing returns. Up to that point, the recognizable mode was naturalism, which has been the last prolongation of realism. Beyond that point, the quality of the attempt may be sufficiently different to require—what Diderot bespoke for Richardson—a new category. Those *nouveaux romans,* which we have lately been reading, might be said to wear the look of post-novels. Paul Valéry considered the art of novel-writing to be "all but inconceivable." He did conceive, as an instance of its futility, one hypothetical sentence: "The Marquise went out at five o'clock." And Claude Mauriac has lately accepted the wager by publishing a novel entitled *La Marquise sortit à cinq heures,* thereby proving that Valéry exaggerated, and that obituaries are premature. Well, we have reached the stage where ingenuity is being strained to prove that the old game can still be

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

played. The old themes can be varied indefinitely; and those who perform the variations deserve our thanks for keeping the spirit of craftsmanship alive. Yet all the cinematographic contrivance of Alain Robbe-Grillet in *Jealousy* leaves us further away from a human relationship than the baffled jealousy of Marcel over Albertine. The *nouveau roman* is a symptom of, and not a solution to, the present crisis of the novel.

Now the decline, or even the demise, of any particular genre need not in itself be a cause for alarm, though the underlying circumstances may claim our serious concern. Story-telling has always been, and will probably go on being, one of the main continuities of culture; by that token it has been, and should continue to be, especially protean in its successive adaptations to cultural change. Certain genres seem to enjoy their heyday under certain historical conditions; the epochs of the drama have presupposed, in every case, a favoring social equilibrium. We are well aware of those institutional factors which have helped the novel to become what Georg Lukács calls "the predominant art form of modern bourgeois culture." We also see the primacy of the form being currently undermined, not merely by specific changes in literary taste but by a general regression from literature itself. It is not only that fiction cannot keep pace with journalism, but that the verbal medium cannot vie with the audiovisual in supplying tangible satisfactions for factual curiosities. Mechanical and electronic reproduction has not yet made literature a thing of the past, as was predicted a generation ago by the populist writer Henri Poulaille. But there can be little doubt that books occupy a far less central place in the lives of readers than in the days when George Sand was a household word. A contemporary Emma Bovary would indulge her fantasies through films and be a reader of movie-magazines. The cinema has taken the place of the library as an agency of sentimental education. The novelist's silent collaborator, the reading public, has altered more than he, to his perplexity.

It is the photograph, according to Malraux, which has effectually competed with the civil directory. The novelist, in spite of Balzac's intention, might prefer to emulate the impressionistic painter, whom the invention of photography had released from the demand for literal representation—not to say photographic realism. The novel itself has consistently moved in a realistic direction: in other words, closer and closer to reality, as continually reinterpreted with reference to a changing style of life and view of the world. This progression seems to be normally irreversible; it is a species of tropism,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

animated by its own freedom of movement. It cannot move backwards, unless its forward path is blocked or counterpressures are brought into play. The novel was set in motion by breaking loose from romance, which had been dominated by conventions. In hierarchical cultures, where status is frozen and values are fixed, the arts tend to be strictly conventionalized, as they were through the longstanding dynasties of Egypt and China and, to a lessening degree, of Byzantium or the medieval West. Realism, which is at odds with convention yet cannot altogether dispense with it, cannot thrive except among the mobile institutions of an open society. "The novel was born with modern capitalism; it is saturated with individualism and liberal culture; it is characteristically middle-class," writes V. S. Pritchett, and then asks: "Is the novel tied to the fate of capitalism and the liberal view of life?" Not knowing the fate of capitalism, we should be begging the question if we tried to divine it from the state of the novel. But we would have the glimmering of an answer, if we could inquire how the novel has fared in one of its great fatherlands, which repudiates capitalism and looks askance at the liberal view of life.

Without presuming to press such an inquiry, a most exacting and illuminating study for those who were competent and free to pursue it, we may relevantly ask what realism can mean in Soviet Russia. We know that Stendhal, Balzac, Zola, and other French realists are as highly esteemed there as foreign writers can be. Maxim Gorki, acknowledging their part in his own intellectual formation, gave eloquent expression to that esteem. Accepting the fact of their middle-class origin, along with the Marxian principle of the class struggle, he hailed them as "apostates from their class," who, by resisting its ideology, had been enabled to "elucidate its life, traditions, and deeds in a critical light." In this respect, they are not unlike the Russian realists of the nineteenth century, whose insight was so deeply rooted in their resistance to the Tsarist autocracy and whose long exiled heir was Gorki himself. After the Revolution, he became the pivotal figure in an official effort to connect the realistic tradition with the communist ideology. The two positions are not incompatible, in so far as both of them criticize the bourgeoisie and sympathize with the proletariat. But, where such a position took independence under a bourgeois regime, it takes no more than conformity under a proletarian dictatorship. The realists have been nothing if not individualists; if they have shown any single trait in common, it has been the habit of viewing things—to echo Gorki's phrase—in a

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

critical light. Consequently, it would be pleonastic for us to speak of critical realism; yet it denotes a necessary distinction, whenever the Marxists invoke their conventional slogan of socialist realism—sometimes condensed to "socrealism," which seems quite appropriate, since it sounds like an *ersatz* product.

It would be just as logical to speak of capitalist realism, Abram Tertz has suggested, or of Christian or Mohammedan realism, as if it were a doctrine rather than a method. Tertz is the pseudonym of a Soviet writer who has managed to publish outside Russia, and who has divulged how Russian writing must conform to the directives of the Communist Party line: "Socialist realism starts from an ideal image to which it adapts the living reality." So did Don Quixote, and that is why Cervantes started the novel off on its realistic course. Could any viewpoint be more remote from the untrammeled observation of Tolstoy? Among the many questions raised by Boris Pasternak through *Doctor Zhivago*, perhaps the most searching was ". . . where is reality in Russia today?" Literature has been lagging behind it, Georg Lukács testifies ambiguously, and the ambiguity seems to hinge on whether reality is given a public or private definition. Fiction is richly detailed in its presentation of war-time experiences, industrial processes, and colorful regions of the Soviet Union. Such incidental naturalism is used to fill in plots and to fill out characters which, more often than not, are blueprints and stereotypes controlled by ideological preconceptions. While Western critics deplore the dearth of heroes, Russians call upon their novelists for a positive hero—and, so long as the living reality can be adapted to the ideal image, they are likely to get him. In short, their socialist realism is, more precisely, an uncritical idealism—or, as they would put it in candid moments, a revolutionary romanticism. The books it fosters, projecting the ideals of their closed society, may in themselves be either good or bad; but they will be closer to epic legends than to novels as we have known them in the self-critical West.

The epic strain, to be sure, had never been quite defunct. Both Tolstoy and Melville touched it, as Zola did momentarily, conferring stature on simple men by bringing them out into the open air and away from cities, the depreciating zones of realism. Joyce's paradox was his conflation of modern urbanism with his anti-hero's reenactment of classical epos. The heresiarch of the Russian Revolution, Leon Trotsky, recognized that realism was never an unmixed element, and that symbolism constituted an important part of the intermixture. In an essay on the Symbolist poets, he allowed: "Artistic crea-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tion, no matter how realistic, has always been and remains symbolist." Art does not blindly copy life; it singles out what is typical; and Trotsky instances the perennial significance of such types as Mephisto, Faust, Hamlet, and Othello. Few, if any, of these would qualify as positive heroes. They are all much too individualistic to typify those attributes which excite hero-worship and which might egg the worshippers on to heroics of their own. On the other hand, when Wagner presented his musico-dramatic tetralogy, its enlightened audiences must have felt immeasurably far removed from the barbaric primitivism of his Volsungs and Valkyries. "People who go to Bayreuth," exclaimed Georges Sorel, "never dream of becoming Germanic heroes!"

The large irony that has overtaken the small irony here, need hardly be underscored. It is additionally ironic that Sorel, of all political theorists, who pointed out the guise that Marxism would take as a twentieth-century mythology, overlooked the ominous potentialities of the Teutonic revival. Yet he went farther than other minds that were framed by the prosaic and well-ordered perspectives of the nineteenth century, and whose consequent view of life was the banal canvas of quotidian realism, by heralding a reality which has been eventful to the point of becoming millennial, where truth has been stranger than fiction and fiction more dangerous than ever because no clear-cut line has divided it from truth. To be able to tell the true from the false, the real from the fictive, with any sense of certainty, presupposes a fairly solid world-view. Art can be viewed and judged as imitation only when men are in confident touch with the realities that are imitated. Otherwise there can be no critical act of comparison, no empirical test for delusive appearances. Appearance itself has been the criterion in most artistic traditions, with what may be behind it either left in a mystical limbo or consigned to a transcendent other world. Esthetically, the crucial relation has therefore been what Erich Auerbach called figural, the correspondence between one symbol and another, rather than the literal relation of image to object. Historically, as in other ways, the realistic approach has been exceptional; and there have been hints at many levels suggesting that its epoch, which began with the humanism of the Renaissance, will soon have receded into the past. In order "to exalt the present and the real," as Walt Whitman did so loudly and firmly, man must feel more thoroughly at home in his world and time.

Instead, he faces that feeling of alienation which Camus has so

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

poignantly attested. Instead of living for the immediacy of the moment or living with the concreteness of the real thing, he looks for comfort in ultimates and abstractions. From the self-conscious attitude of modernity, of nowness, newness, novelty, he reverts to timeless patterns and traditional sanctions. "From the bourgeois and individual to the typical and mythical"—so Thomas Mann, in recapitulating his own development, traced the trajectory of the novel during the past generation. That it might in its most interesting manifestations be no longer a novel, that the superimposition of myth was creating a new or transitional form—such was the programmatic argument of T. S. Eliot when he reviewed *Ulysses*. No fiction, of course, has ever existed without some sort of mythical substratum. "Literature is a decomposed and rationalized mythology," to the psychologist Théodule Ribot. "The myth approximates the ordinary conditions of human life until it becomes a romantic, and finally a realistic, novel." From the vantage-point of comparative religion, Mircea Eliade has lately added the remarkably stimulating suggestion that the novels of the nineteenth century be reconsidered as a corpus of myths. This would entail a whole series of thematic studies in the folklore of realism. Without delaying to adumbrate them here, or to consider some of the recent mythographic interpretations, we may grant that the realists make use of romantic conventions and that a recessive element of symbolism is powerful in their work. But if the myth has been the source of modern fiction, it has come down to earth; its collapse, as Ortega taught us, was the basic occasion for the novel, the anti-mythical novel of Cervantes.

With all due reverence for origins, we ought not to forget how far we have traveled from them, or how strenuously the realists have labored to counteract the influences of simple-minded credulity. Happily, we can take fantasy for granted; it springs eternal in human situations; civilized cultures may well distinguish themselves from primitive tribes by bringing reason to bear on imagination. Realism is a rigorous discipline. All the other forms of fiction may delude and delight. The novel, though born among them, must turn against them. Ungrateful task! Yet it is by becoming mythoclastic, rationalistic, analytic, that it has sublimated a casual pastime into a mode of knowledge. Literature, of every kind and in every age, belongs to life and reveals it somehow or other, sometimes obliquely or incidentally. The direct and deliberate revelation, the confrontation of life by literature, is uniquely characteristic of the modern outlook as Matthew Arnold has defined it, with its challenge to life and its

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

criticism of life. André Malraux has broadened that panorama, broad as it is, with his dictum: "Our art . . . is becoming an interrogation of the world." To strike the interrogative note is to realize anew how the pace has been set by experimental science and—here M. Malraux would enlarge his question mark—liberal democracy. Better a question mark than a period, where there is so much at stake.

At all events, there can be no doubt about the cohabitation, tense as it must have been throughout, between the realistic movement and the bourgeois life-style. So far as life had been banalized—to adopt Gilbert Durand's word—by the middle class, it could be redeemed by the cult of art; and the Flaubertian concept of the artist's vocation, as Thomas Mann has reviewed it, was itself a perquisite of the high bourgeoisie which twentieth-century writers can ill afford. With this personal dedication to goals set beyond the values of a materialistic environment went an inborn propensity to protest against that environment, which André Gide has both exemplified and formulated. In a digression inspired by Wagnerian music-drama, Proust is moved to reconsider *The Human Comedy* and some of the other large-scale works of the century as examples of what he terms *autocontemplation*. The term is not elegant, though it suits the circumstances better than *autocritique*—which has come to mean the very opposite, the renunciation of independence by Soviet artists. In contrast, the critics of middle-class society, free in their semi-detachment to attack its wrongs and expose its defects, crowned it with the redeeming virtues of self-contemplation, self-awareness, self-knowledge. Those works of theirs are, in the fullness of irony, its monumental glories. Proust spoke of them as frescoes in his praise of Balzac, and Zola applied the same artistic metaphor to his own project. From this distance they seem more like windows, opening through the opaque walls of time past, to disclose varieties of existence which we could never have known in other ways. There are many windows in the house of fiction, as we should always be glad to hear James remind us; but none of them are wider and clearer than these, or have let in more light on the darker places of time and fate and human will.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ROBERT KIELY

The Craft of Despondency—The Traditional Novelists

IT PROBABLY SEEMS a peculiar form of damnation bordering on faint praise for a contemporary novelist to hear himself continually compared with his late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century predecessors. Yet it does mean something to say Waugh is Dickensian, Bowen is Woolfian, Greene Conradian, and Snow Trollopian. It means, for one thing, that there is a sizable group of mid-century writers who have taken the novel pretty much as they found it after the First World War and set about sustaining and embellishing it rather than introducing revolutionary innovations in form and function. It is interesting to conjecture why this has happened. One of the most obvious explanations would probably concern the natural tendency to react conservatively immediately following periods of large-scale experimentation.

But a more concrete question, the pursuit of which ought to suggest some answers to the larger problem of literary trend, is what kinds of novels have been produced by these "traditionalist" writers. The category is admittedly large and not very clearly defined, and it suggests the names of a great many contemporaries. Yet there are, for sheer mastery of language, eccentricity of characterization, precision, and popularity (which is a significant aspect of the tradition they maintain), three in particular who persist in being entertaining, infuriating, and talked about. I am speaking of Evelyn Waugh and Graham Greene in England and Katherine Anne Porter who, though long distinguished in America for short fiction, has only recently entered the ranks of modern novelists.

Ever since reading *Ship of Fools* I have been visited by recurrent fantasies in which people from other novels of the late 'forties and 'fifties join the passengers of the *Vera*. And the creatures of Waugh and Greene are the ones who come most often to mind.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Characters from *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold,* with its long sea-voyage, and *A Burnt-Out Case,* which opens with Querry travelling on a river-boat, suggest themselves immediately and perhaps superficially. But beyond that, I would like very much to eavesdrop on a pious conversation among three Catholic gentlemen like Guy Crouchback, Dr. Schumann, and Major Scobie; hear Mrs. Treadwell, Julia Stitch, and Louise Scobie having a matronly chit-chat on the fantail; or watch the outcome of a powder-room encounter of ingenues: Helen Rolt, Virginia Troy, and Jenny Brown, for instance.

Perhaps my imaginary game is academic and morbid, but then so is the one played so skillfully by these three writers. In a century of liberation from semicolons and capital letters, they punctuate and capitalize with persistent care. They speak of a man and woman "sleeping together" or "——ing" even though the blunter words have long since been tried and found serviceable. In a period of journalistic slang, hopelessly technical jargon, sociological gibberish, ambiguous shortcuts and pointless circumlocutions, their diction is precise and elegant. They are on unashamedly familiar terms with the Bible and Shakespeare, to say nothing of the nineteenth-century masters they so often resemble. They value coherence and economy. But they share a respect for language which often seems to exceed that which they hold for life.

Each in his own way presents in refined prose a vision of man reduced to his most primitive and brutish level. The story, however politely told, is rarely of corrigible folly or superficial vice, but of all-out degradation, a baseness which sours the flesh and scents the air. William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* is perhaps the type of the neatly and conventionally told tale of human retrogression. But its singularity in the past decade is primarily one of degree. It is a novel uncluttered by detail; therefore the divergence between the quietly civilized prose and the rapid degeneration of the social and moral situation is continuously before the reader. Waugh, Greene, and Porter have their decorative quirks, their delightful whims and artful eccentricities, which occasionally obscure the bareness of their landscapes. But they too—with their Crouchbacks and Treadwells, their Helen Rolts and Virginia Troys—are austere allegorists of a peculiarly modern kind.

Obviously, there is not the clarity of relationship between object and concept that one finds in earlier examples of pure allegory. Still, like all allegorists, these contemporaries tend to work from theory

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

toward the concrete rather than the other way around. Each seems to have made up his mind about life in a way that the symbolist novelists of the previous generation had not. For all the very genuine diversity of their fiction, one is often conscious that man is being forced into a theoretical mold—and that the mold pinches. We repeatedly find nature being to disadvantage dressed.

One has only to think of Miss Porter's *Vera* in contrast with Conrad's *Patna* or *Narcissus,* Waugh's London as opposed to Joyce's Dublin, or Greene's Mexico in contrast to Lawrence's to realize that the more recent writers have tended to emphasize the general analogical characteristics of setting rather than the distinguishing marks of specific identity. They are more obviously interested in suggesting broad concepts of isolation, passage, or barrenness than in hinting at more complicated, shifting, even contradictory associations between particular elements of concrete reality and the internal varieties of human experience. When they do immerse themselves in the concrete they are rarely symbolically suggestive. They embrace materiality at the expense of idea and relax into a highly polished but superficial form of journalism. This fault is often noted in Greene and Waugh, but Miss Porter, in spite of her extraordinary self-discipline as a craftsman, is not altogether free of it.

For a variety of reasons, allegory seems particularly compatible with the more prohibitive and gloomy aspects of morality. When joy or good humor invades a potentially allegorical narrative—as it does so often in Chaucer and Spenser—the rigid framework tends to give way to gusto and, in some cases, to a kind of visionary improvisation unhampered by didacticism. But in the fictional worlds created by Waugh, Greene, and Katherine Anne Porter, there is precious little danger of joy intruding to spoil things—at least, not joy in the Coleridgean sense of "entire and therefore well being, when the emotional and intellectual faculties are in equipoise." It would be no simple task to discover a character in the recent fiction of these three authors who achieves such balance even for a moment. We find instead the polarities Coleridge describes in an essay on *Hamlet:*

> Man is distinguished from the brute animals in proportion as thought prevails over sense: but in the healthy processes of the mind, a balance is constantly maintained between the impressions from outward objects and the inward operations of the intellect:—for if there be an overbalance of the contemplative faculty, man thereby becomes the creature of mere meditation, and loses his natural power of action.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Guy Crouchback, the protagonist of Waugh's World War Two trilogy, is a meditative hero. As his name suggests, he is physically and emotionally incapacitated. He is not visibly disfigured, but he is without lustiness, without vigor; he is older than his comrades-in-arms (who refer to him as Uncle), apparently sterile, and, according to his wife, generally thin-blooded:

'I think all you Crouchbacks are overbred and undersexed. . . . You're dying out as a family. . . . Even Angela's boy, they tell me, wants to be a monk. Why do you Crouchbacks do so little ———ing?' And again she used without offence that then unprintable word.

But Guy, we soon begin to suspect, crouches back from human contact as much out of choice as out of weakness or indecision. Intellectually and spiritually he is very highly developed indeed. Yet he does hold back, not only from his wife, but from his fellow halberdiers for whom he feels so little spontaneous warmth that he must discipline himself to utter the traditional "Here's how" when downing an ale with them. We need only glance at the world into which Waugh has thrown his sensitive and cerebral hero to understand well enough why he despises it so much. And it is at the point where we begin to see Crouchback as aloof, rather than involuntarily isolated, that we discern an identification between author and protagonist which reduces the possibility of a tragic or satiric treatment of his character. What we get instead is comfortable despair in a world of carefully contrived madness.

It is a commonplace to call Waugh's world insane or absurd, but those words do not distinguish his genius very clearly from that of other comic writers. What is more important is to see that he achieves absurdity in a special way. In spite of the fact that his trilogy is filled with the external trappings of Anglo-Saxon civilization—manor houses and men's clubs, ancient military orders and family oratories—its subject is humanity reduced to its most elementary physical aspect, and its hero a person peculiarly burdened, like Christian under the weight of his bundle, with an active mind and conscience. Most of the other characters spend their time mindlessly anticipating monstrous disasters, chasing or fleeing unseen enemies, copulating, getting food, and seeking shelter. They are like primitive hunters sniffing and pawing after the object of their desires and then guarding it suspiciously, like a dog's bone, once it has been momentarily obtained. What the object is, defines them as types. We are told little else about them, and learn quickly enough not to care.

A large section of *Men at Arms* deals with the escapades of one

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of Guy's fellow officers-in-training named Apthorpe, recently returned from the African bush. Apthorpe's best friend is an expert on apes, named "Chatty" Corner, "a brown man with grizzled hair. . . . It was easy to see how he had gained a footing among the gorillas. . . . He swung his head from side to side gazing about him from under shaggy brows as though seeking some high path by which he could swing himself aloft and lie cradled in solitude among the rafters."

It has been said that the part of the novel which deals with the use, preservation, and eventual destruction of Apthrope's "thunderbox," a portable chemical-toilet, is a long farcical digression which spoils the structure of the novel. Farcical it may be, but it is not digressive. Apthorpe, having recently emerged from the jungle, is at a particularly early stage of development even for a member of Waugh's cast of primitives. His energies are concentrated on simple biological needs which have been settled or put out of the center of civilized minds for thousands of years. Not only is he obsessed with the pleasures of defecation, but he is compelled by an instinct, unaffected by regulations or consideration for fellow soldiers, to construct elaborately secure "nests" for himself at every new post, however temporary.

If Apthorpe's "character" can be summarized by his interest in the elimination of waste and the construction of shelter, Colonel Ritchie-Hook, the one-eyed Brigadier, may be defined as a direct descendant of the prehistoric hunter. He is the professional soldier, a bird of prey with "a single, terrible eye," a "lean skew nose," and a maimed, gloved "black claw" for a hand. Like most primitive warriors, Ritchie-Hook will fight anything anywhere. But what really sets him apart, what adds the baroque touch to Waugh's characterization, is the pure barbaric gusto with which the Colonel enters the field of battle. "Where lesser men collected helmets Ritchie-Hook once came back from a raid across no-man's-land with the dripping head of a German sentry in either hand." And before the second book of the trilogy is over, Ritchie-Hook once again secures an enemy "coconut" for a souvenir.

The major feminine role in the trilogy is played by Virginia Troy, Crouchback's ex-wife, whom he remarries to provide a father for the child she is about to bear another man. Virginia is compared mockingly with Helen of Troy and not-so-mockingly with the heroines of Fitzgerald and Huxley. "Hemingway coarsened the image with his Brett, but the type persisted—in books and in life. Virginia was the last of them—the exquisite, the doomed and the damning, with

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

expiring voices—a whole generation younger. We shall never see anyone like her again in literature or in life and I'm very glad to have known her." Fortunately, Waugh puts these sentiments into the mouth of a minor character, which allows the reader to take them ironically.

Next to Virginia Troy the heroines of Fitzgerald and Hemingway are intellectual giants, sensitive, soulful, and filled with human compassion. Waugh, in this case, seems to believe what Pope once let fall: that "most women have no characters at all." Virginia is simply another empty-headed inhabitant of his twentieth-century jungle. As a female of the species her peculiar form of retrogression is sexual. She moves from marriage to marriage, lover to lover, bed to bed with no apparent discrimination, esthetic or moral. Her conversation is liberally sprinkled with all the "then unprintable words," and she consistently refers to her current mate as "the beast."

It is evident that the maniacal obsessions with waste, warfare, and haphazard sexuality constitute Waugh's evaluation of the retrogression of modern civilization. But in contrast with previous works —*Vile Bodies* and *The Loved One,* in particular—there is a dulling of the satiric point and a simultaneous activation of the allegorical potential. The best satire—including much of Waugh's own earlier writing—is energized by a fierce, sometimes destructive wrath or a relentless Dickensian optimism about the possibility of improving the human condition.

Waugh's trilogy, on the whole, is neither angry nor hopeful. The tone of the book, like the character of the protagonist, is resigned and bemused. The moral situations are intricately painted backdrops which the hero walks past rather than dimensioned dilemmas in which he may become involved. Guy Crouchback resembles Christian more than he does Hamlet or Gulliver. He is confronted with pride, envy, anger, sloth, avarice, lust, gluttony, and an array of ancillary vices, including cowardice and deceit. None is made to appear particularly appealing, however, and very early in the book we learn not to expect Guy to be much more inclined to them than he would be to swing from the rafters with "Chatty" Corner.

Crouchback's predetermined reluctance to do evil, added to a portrait of vice which is not so much repulsive or seductive as absurd and tiresome, contribute to making the trilogy a static assertion about the human condition rather than a personal tragedy or an effective social satire. Even the war has little power to change people in any profound way. For all the talk of political treachery, patriotism, and

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

physical discomfort; for all the supposed chaos of "biffing" and "flapping," Waugh does not succeed in making the war any less rigid than the other parts of his design. It is a frame, like Miss Porter's ship, which brings the characters together, isolates them from the "ordinary" world, and allows us to see human nature that "hasn't had time to disguise itself."

Ship of Fools is, in all sorts of ways, a different kind of work from Waugh's trilogy. It is a richer, more feminine, and more modern book. There is no single protagonist, though one of the least despicable characters, with his Christian sense of honor, his aristocratic heritage, physical frailty, and muddled sentimentality, resembles Guy Crouchback in more than a few ways. Unlike Greene and Waugh, Miss Porter was born and reared a Roman Catholic. ("My ancestors went into Ireland blue-nosed Protestants and came out blue-eyed Catholics.") Though her novel is not obviously religious, it is pervaded by an almost medieval fondness for order prompted by what appears to be an equally medieval horror of the hellish chaos which threatens beneath the surface of every human act.

If Waugh's trilogy hovers between moral allegory and beast fable, *Ship of Fools* does the same. And, once again, nature is to disadvantage dressed. We are not presented with animals of grace or beauty—no stallions here, no deer nor doves—but with the meanest, filthiest, most absurd members of the animal kingdom. The pattern of the book, and it becomes a very rigid pattern indeed, is that of the strong taking advantage of the weak. The roles shift and change, which gives the narrative an illusion of variety and flexibility, but the pattern remains constant to the end. The animals in this ark are all beasts of prey.

As early as page fourteen an incident occurs which begins and, at the same time, symbolizes the course of events which follows for the next four hundred eighty-three pages. Mrs. Treadwell, the fastidious American divorcee, has peremptorily refused to give money to an old beggar woman in Veracruz. The beggar

> fiercely as a pouncing hawk, had darted out her long hard claws, seized a fold of flesh near the shoulder and wrung it, wrung it bitterly, her nails biting into the skin; and instantly had fled, her bare feet spanking on the pavement. Well, it had been like a bad dream.

Life, for most of the characters on Miss Porter's ship, is a nightmare. They dream sentimental, vain, and noble things about themselves which never come true, and beastly, obscene, wretched things about one another which often do. Occasionally Miss Porter assigns

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

her characters a place on the evolutionary scale in her own narrative voice. Lizzi Spockenkieker is introduced on page twelve "screaming like a peahen in German at her companion, a little dumpling of a man, pink and pig-snouted." The avian and porcine associations are repeated regularly throughout the book when this repulsive and comic twosome makes an appearance.

But more often Miss Porter allows the characters to speak or think for themselves, to formulate "independent" opinions about one another, to perform the brutal and defensive act of dehumanization on their own. "Well," says the desk clerk to a waiter in the hotel where the passengers have assembled before embarkation, "here come our burros again!" He goes on to suggest that the Baumgartners have dressed their small son like a monkey, and the American girl wearing slacks is "a mule, perhaps."

The classification in this bestiary continues apace. The Spanish dancers chatter like "a flock of quarreling birds"; the Cuban medical students call themselves "Les Camelots de la Cucaracha" and elect La Condesa president or "Cockroach Extraordinary"; Ric and Rac derive their names from comic-strip dogs; Herr Lowenthal, who as a Jew is treated by most of the passengers like an animal, regards Catholics as swine and recalls with some pleasure the words of his "sweet old grandmother": "The dirty cannibal Goyim—they even eat their own brothers—the pigs! Then they turn into pigs when they die and eat little Jewish boys!"

The characters continually try to dignify their own commonplace fears and selfish motives by reducing those of others to the beastly or insane. Herr Freytag flatters himself by attempting to charm Mrs. Treadwell. But when he fears he has gone too far, he places the blame on her feminine wantoness rather than on his own narcissism. "The one sure way to bring on the inescapable devotion of a dog was to beat him regularly," he reasons in his invariably banal way.

One of the peculiar pleasures in reading this novel, as in watching a play by Ben Jonson, is to see foolish or vicious characters eventually become victims of follies very much like their own. We are pleased, for example, to find Jenny Brown, the young American girl, thinking of the same Herr Freytag as a hungry mongrel when he begins pressing his attentions on her: "What dog will refuse meat that is thrown to him?" Jenny at least has the honesty to see her own role unsentimentally, but even these lapses into self-knowledge do not save her from participating in the vices of this sea-borne

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

menagerie and seeming to other characters just another sister under the pelt.

The catalogue of beasts is long and depressing. Some bite, some only nibble, but all seem more or less driven by the same blind instincts. The reaction to such a world in the course of nearly five hundred pages is likely to shift from amusement to sheer horror and occasionally to boredom. Near the end of the novel Lizzi Spockenkieker enters her stateroom drunk, hysterical, and battered about the edges.

> 'Oh, the brute, the savage, the beast,' she repeated monotonously.
> Mrs. Treadwell repressed her airy impulse to ask, 'Which one of them?'

Barbarism can become monotonous and Miss Porter knows it. All the care and craftsmanship in the world cannot alter that fact.

As in Waugh's trilogy, there is something repetitiously ceremonious about the presentation of morbidity and brutishness in *Ship of Fools*. The comic irony, the satiric rage, the ruthless mockery of human folly are stylish but basically unvaried. One continually encounters a stance—not an insincere pose, but a position of weary resignation beyond scorn or generosity. The artistic damage done resembles that inflicted by any inflexible convention. There is a tendency to let the foregone conclusion absorb everything. Character, landscape, incident are subordinated to and controlled by an abstraction. *Ship of Fools* begins with a rather clear statement of the general assumption which is to be particularized through the rest of the book:

> The anonymous, faceless travelers, their humanity nearly exhausted, their separate sufferings, memories, intentions and baffled wills locked within them, ran doggedly . . . sweating, despairing, famished . . . in a final series of attempts to gather up the ragged edges of their lives and belongings. . . . *This common predicament did not by any means make of them fellow sufferers. On the contrary, each chose to maintain his pride and separateness within himself.*

The narrative is a series of brilliant variations on this sober theme; but to embellish is not necessarily to develop. The reader may be in for strokes of wit, unexpected scenes of pure farce, shocks of brute sexuality and physical violence. The mind is pierced and jolted by this book but it is not enlarged. The danger, as in all sophisticated disciplines, is that virtuosity can stun vigor. This is a lesson which Miss Porter's novel teaches us about life and one which

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

it demonstrates about art. Mrs. Treadwell, for example, is well-mannered, well-travelled, well-schooled; she is fastidious, discriminating, controlled. But she achieves her self-discipline at great cost. Having chosen to "maintain her pride and separateness within herself," she is at first unwilling and ultimately unable to share herself with anyone else even for a moment. The simplest display of uncalculated feeling becomes, for her, "awkward," untidy, a discoloration of the kind the beggar's pinch produced on her pale arm.

When she does act spontaneously, it is out of drunkenness or rage. With an irrationality bordering on insanity, she beats the dazed William Denny with her dancing shoe, breaking and discoloring the skin on his face. But even these occasional violent outbursts, both her own and those which threaten her from outside, do not change Mrs. Treadwell. They are part of the "bad dream." She constantly reassures herself by thinking, "Naturally things like that can't happen." And in the terms of this novel, she is right. Mrs. Treadwell, like all the other characters, can neither penetrate nor be penetrated, except in a meaningless physical sense. In this static universe, we don't expect David Darling and Jenny Angel to stop torturing one another or Herr Professor Hutten to pronounce an unpedantic word; we don't expect La Condesa to stop taking drugs, Herr Baumgartner to stop drinking, or William Denny to stop chasing prostitutes. In short, we expect no one to change. Nor do we expect that anyone will understand, love, or communicate with anyone else.

When the young German officer speaks to Mrs. Treadwell of love, she replies with disgust: "Don't say it, don't say it, I cannot bear the sound of it." There is sex enough in *Ship of Fools,* but it is loveless, selfish, and, more often than not, only another variant on the predaciousness which is part of shipboard routine.

It would not be altogether accurate to say that the possibility of change is excluded entirely from the world of the *Vera.* But the only change emphasized is decline. The young people foresee one another aging. The old see themselves dying. David Scott, watching the Mexican bride and groom, sees that "under their beauty there lay the promise of dryness and formality in time"; Jenny Brown "loved David's roseate flush, a fresh masculine young tone of coloring. . . . If he didn't look out, all that food and drink would catch up on him some day, he'd wake up some morning and find that fatal ruby network on his nose and cheeks"; "We are all sick," says the German officer to Mrs. Treadwell, "We are all dying, only not at the same pace . . . well, is that anything to get excited about?" Per-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

haps not. If the human race has passed its ripeness and we are all rotting on the vine, nation by nation, clan by clan, one by one, nothing much will help. In a world in which human intercourse is equated with violation, and change with decay, the God of Love must be dead or deaf, and does not seem likely to rise again to fertilize the land.

Graham Greene's view of human nature is hardly more sanguine than that of Waugh and Katherine Porter. His subject is failure, disease, impotence, decay: physical emblems of moral disorder (which may or may not prove the necessary means to redemption). Two of his most recent novels, *The Quiet American* (1956) and *A Burnt-Out Case* (1961) tend to turn the interesting possibility into a cliché. But in *The Heart of the Matter* and *The Power and the Glory* he introduces characters as much buffeted and disillusioned by fate as Waugh's halberdiers or Porter's fools, and, at the same time, allows for the possibility that they *may* have lived for some reason and perhaps even participated clumsily in nobility.

It is hardly necessary to illustrate the primitive and predatory nature of the world into which Greene takes his readers. The whiskey priest is literally hunted by state police through some of the most barren and uncivilized regions of Mexico. Major Scobie is watched and pursued by Wilson, who has "brown dog's eyes, a setter's eyes," and is first seen on page one as a vulture alights on the roof above his head. Greene is often more heavy-handed with ominous signs (not quite symbols) than either Waugh or Porter. Of the three he is the least discreet. His prose is not always so elegant nor his social instincts so subtle as theirs. His art is the most obviously "religious," yet in at least two comparatively short novels he reveals an uncertainty about human nature which gives them a spaciousness not approached in the longer works of Waugh and Porter.

Still, the resemblances among the main characters of these three authors seem, at first, quite striking. Crouchback, Dr. Schumann, the whiskey priest, and Scobie have been miscast in life in similar ways. They are failures with a Christian conscience, religious men with a poor opinion of their own piety and an underdeveloped sense of God's mercy. They cannot forgive their own weaknesses and therefore cannot conceive of a God who would. Each wears the fool's cap of a profession which seems to expose and damn him. Crouchback is a mild, peace-loving soldier; Dr. Schumann a sickly

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

physician; the priest an incontinent "celibate"; and Scobie a corrupted policeman.

Surrounded by beasts of prey and cast in roles they are unfit for, these men turn inward and seek in the mind an order and safety the natural universe seems not to provide. Dr. Schumann and Guy Crouchback are Catholic aristocrats, refined to frailty, who find peace if not strength in old traditions. Major Scobie, like Mrs. Treadwell, tries to avoid injury by creating his own private "reality" which permits him to view external events as part of a bad dream. When, for example, he borrows money to send his wife to South Africa, he cannot admit that he really wants to be rid of her. He lives through the day of her departure as though he were in a trance, until the very moment of farewell:

> Everything had been unreal, but this suddenly was real pain, the moment of death. Like a prisoner he had not believed in the trial: it had been a dream: the condemnation had been a dream and the truck ride, and then suddenly here he was with his back to the blank wall and everything was true.

The "moment of death," the "blank wall," is for Scobie the intrusion of truth into his protective dream. It is the discomforting recognition that he is relieved to see his wife go away: that his apparent act of love (in giving her a vacation) is actually motivated by selfishness and, at best, pity.

> As the launch moved away she was almost at once indistinguishable. . . . The dream had finished: change was over: life had begun again.

The momentary and unpleasant revelation of truth does change Scobie and lead him into a new life. Up to this point he has been conventionally respectable, faithful to his wife, and loyal in performing his official duties. But in a relatively short time, he commits adultery, becomes entangled with a dishonest Syrian, and indirectly brings about the death of his trusted native servant. Change obviously does occur, then, even though it is a change for the worse. In a moral universe of infinite possibility, a man may be "reborn" to degradation as well as to glory. The point is that the human condition thus envisioned is not a static one; for all its gloom, Greene's view seems not so rigidly pessimistic as the glossier and more carefully wrought nightmares of Waugh and Porter. Fiction which allows its characters the freedom to fall down implies that they were once in a standing position, and may again assume or even transcend it.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Without this freedom the range of dramatic vigor is severely limited, and even the most admirable virtuosity wears thin.

Vigor seems a curious word to apply to the weary and disillusioned characters of Graham Greene. The mourning band borders his fictional world as surely as it does those of Evelyn Waugh and Katherine Anne Porter. The single heroic and undefiled character in *The Heart of the Matter,* as in Waugh's trilogy and *Ship of Fools,* is a dead man, suddenly and pointlessly killed for an outrageously unworthy cause. Greene's martyr is Ali, the loyal native boy of Major Scobie (re-created less successfully in *A Burnt-Out Case* as Deo Gratias); Waugh's martyr is a young English soldier discovered in a yard by Guy Crouchback during the battle of Crete; Miss Porter's martyr is a Basque wood-carver named Echegaray who is drowned while saving a dog. In each case the dead "hero" is a comparatively minor figure. (Waugh's soldier is never even seen alive.) But the three deaths are treated with a gravity and absence of irony which gives them an importance not altogether explained by the narrative surface.

After Major Scobie has become involved with Helen Rolt and Yusef, the Syrian "merchant," his guilt increases to the point where he can no longer trust the fidelity of his servant, Ali. Having become deceitful himself, he ceases to believe in the honesty and loyalty of anyone else. Greene's point is made emphatically. The more entangled Scobie becomes in sin, the less able he is to conceive of goodness. He creates his servant and his God in his own unreliable image and eventually brings about the actual death of one and the symbolic martyrdom of the other. When Scobie discovers the body of his murdered servant, Greene fuses the literal and symbolic roles of the dead innocent:

> The body lay coiled and unimportant like a broken watchspring under a pile of empty petrol drums: it looked as though it had been shoveled there to wait for morning and the scavenger birds. . . . The seal grey neck had been slashed and slashed again. Yes, he thought, I can trust him now. . . . It was as if the body had cast him off, disowned him—'I know you not.' He swore aloud hysterically. 'By God, I'll get the man who did this,' but under the anonymous stare insincerity withered. He thought: I am the man. . . . Oh God, he thought, I've killed you. . . . God lay there under the petrol drums and Scobie felt the tears in his mouth, salt in the cracks of his lips. You served me and I did this to you. You were faithful to me, and I wouldn't trust you.
>
> 'What is it, sah?' the corporal whispered, kneeling by the body.
>
> 'I loved him,' Scobie said.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

It is not the business of the critic to determine, in the theological sense, whether Scobie's love redeems his soul. It is enough—in fact, a good deal—to say that it redeems him as a character. Once again Scobie's dream has been penetrated and destroyed. His new self-awareness—though it is only partial—makes a continuation of his former life impossible. He is, for the second time in the novel, "reborn," this time to die physically and finally at his own hands. Whether Scobie's self-murder is an unforgivable sin or a misguided act of charity, whether it is a display of cowardice or a rare sign of courage, Greene deliberately leaves unanswered.

But in this sordid, unlikely, overly-contrived dilemma, there is a possibility of renewal—not escape, as some critics would have it, but of flux—which gives Greene's world a moral *and* psychological vitality not attained by Waugh's or Porter's. Greene's dead god still has the power to elicit love if not trust, and to bend or straighten his creatures with the force of that love. Ali's death may have been mean and pointless, but it also may have been purifying in that it gives his master a glimpse of truth and reawakens love within him. One can reject Greene's theology from beginning to end, and still find it difficult to deny the human validity of this situation.

Evelyn Waugh's martyred soldier is also compared with a "saint" and with the crucified Christ. But he is a monument rather than a "broken watchspring"; he elicits awe and reverence rather than love; and Guy Crouchback responds with ceremonious tenderness and the decorum of an English Catholic gentleman:

> A young English soldier . . . lay on a stretcher motionless. . . . Guy could not help. The young man was dead, undamaged, it seemed. He lay as though at rest. The few corpses Guy had seen in Crete had sprawled awkwardly. This soldier lay like an effigy on a tomb—like Sir Roger in his shadowy shrine at Santa Dulcina. Only the bluebottles that clustered round his lips and eyes proclaimed that he was flesh. Why was he lying here? Who were these girls? . . . Lacking words the three of them stood by the body, stiff and mute as figures in a sculptured Deposition. To bury the dead is one of the corporal works of charity. There were no tools here to break the ground. . . . Guy knelt and took the disc from the cold breast. He read a number, a name, a designation, R.C. 'May his soul and the souls of all the faithful departed, in the mercy of God, rest in peace.' Guy stood. The bluebottles returned to the peaceful young face. Guy saluted and passed on.

This episode stands out among hundreds of pages of farce and irony as a simple, almost sentimental, statement of the dignity of death in the midst of one of the most futile battles of the war. Guy

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Crouchback, a noble soul himself, can recognize nobility as easily as he can read R. C. on the man's disc and respond with the *Requiescat*. The scene has the calm and static solemnity of ritual or, as Waugh suggests, of a sculptured Deposition. Once the roles are defined, the terms of the encounter are clear and immutable. Guy could no more act differently here than he could think of sharing Apthorpe's thunder-box or go about decapitating enemy troops with Colonel Ritchie-Hook. If he is not seriously weakened by the viciousness and folly around him, neither is he changed or endowed with new power by his visit to the shrine of the divine patriot. Guy, the beasts who torment him, and even the God he worships are all part of a set mold which has been beautifully worked. But only those who have been redeemed by pre-arrangement with the author will stumble on the tomb of the Lord.

The death of Echegaray, the Basque wood-carver, in *Ship of Fools* is probably the most moving and deeply serious event in the novel. He is the only character of any importance about whom we know too little to despise. He is a poor man, an artisan, and a member of an ancient race. Beyond certain physical details, his resemblance to the martyred Christ is much less clear than in the other cases. Yet death does bring to him an almost superhuman dignity:

> The dead man, naked to the waist, washed and purified by the salt sea, lay at perfect ease in the state and dignity of his death. Dr. Schumann in his long experience as unwilling witness of death in nearly all its aspects had never lost his awe and tenderness for that Presence. He felt it now, again, an almost invisible shade hovering over them. He knew . . . that the man was dead, yet he continued for some time to listen . . . for some flutter or whisper of life in the gaunt rib cage and the sunken famished belly of the long body with its great knotted shoulder joints, the skeleton arms, and big warped hands, now curled inward like a child's. Nothing. He rose and took a last glimpse at the dark melancholy exhausted face now closed in a secretive faint smile. The women, huddled together near the dead man's feet, began praying aloud . . . and one of the men came forward and crossed the limp hands on the breast, and tenderly covered him up.

The serenity and poise of this dead man form a sharp contrast with the conflict, imbalance, and roar of the rest of the book. But reverence here is given not so much to the man himself nor to his "almost too crudely natural" deed, but to death, the "Presence," which has brought "perfect ease," "dignity," and even a "faint smile" to the face of this melancholy and exhausted creature. Extinction is the redeeming fact of his life: pure, perfect, and final. It has the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

divine attributes of absoluteness, mystery, and inevitability. Echegaray is a sacrificed victim, and Miss Porter visualizes, even more concretely than Waugh, a scene which resembles a Descent from the Cross or a Deposition.

But Echegaray has saved only himself. He is no redeemer of his fellow men; immediately after his burial at sea, they fall "in a milling thrashing heap" on one of their own number and continue the series of brutal and meaningless crucifixions which constitute the core of their lives. His death is as odd and incomprehensible to the passengers as his name. "A strange one," says Frau Hutten, "almost comic, outlandish . . . Echege—Echege—." But if her halting attempts to pronounce the word contain echoes of "Ecce—ecce—," the hint of a promise is not fulfilled. "Echegaray," said her husband. "Ah yes. I remember several Basques of that name in Mexico City." This is not the "lamb of God" nor the King of the Jews mocked by Pontius Pilate. He is only a drowned Basque, perhaps really quite uninteresting except for the fact that he is luckier than his fellow passengers for having slipped once and for all from that wretched ship.

It is tempting to explain the special quality of the literary traditionalism of these three novelists in terms of their associations with Catholicism. But that is only partially satisfying as a correlation. They aren't, after all, the only traditional stylists in recent decades; and the others represent a considerable range of belief and skepticism. Moreover, artists like Gerard Manley Hopkins and T. S. Eliot retained their moral and theological orthodoxy without being stylistically conventional. Much the same may be said of modern Catholic writers like Brendan Behan and Brother Antoninus.

What does distinguish Waugh, Greene, and Miss Porter from most of their contemporaries is that their moral concerns are profoundly affected by Christian traditionalism. That is to say, they ask Catholic questions even if their implied answers are personal to the point of apparent non-conformism. They wonder about the nature of evil, which they tend to see as an actual and energetic force rather than as a symptom of neurosis or an aspect of *ennui*. They probe the mysteries of temptation and damnation. They believe in the fall of man and the "vale of tears," though they often prompt one to wonder what became of the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.

It is quite possible that, in the opinion of these novelists whose major and most despondent works have been published after World War II, man fell too far during that prolonged atrocity to be

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

redeemed even by the martyred Christ. If so, such loss of faith in man and God is, of course, heretical. But heresy is a meaningful word only in relation to some orthodoxy. A value lost and longed for, a power weakened or stiffened to brittleness haunts the novels of these authors and makes them serious even in their thinnest moments.

Conrad, Lawrence, Joyce—to a lesser extent Hemingway and Faulkner—made heavier demands on the English language. They strained syntax and grammar, invented new words and employed old "unliterary" ones in an effort to seduce, shock, or amuse readers into life. They *used* language, sometimes disrespectfully, but always with passion and inventiveness; they toyed and tampered with it, even tormented it. Words were the living gods with which they continually grappled. The tendency among some contemporaries (and this is less true of Greene than of Waugh and Miss Porter) is to enshrine language in an exquisite tabernacle and there to venerate it as an impersonal deity. But this inclination is only superficially Catholic. Such a ritual is less concerned with incarnation or transubstantiation than with the perfection of its own self-contained ends. Its celebrants do not turn to nature with love, anger, or hope; they turn away from it, even while describing its incorrigible faults, and seek refuge in the formalism, stability, and unquestioned beauties of well-established artifice.

One can hardly help feeling, after reading Waugh, Porter, and the recent Greene, that the extent of their devotion to literary convention is, in part, a measure of their disaffection with human nature. They seem to have decided that if most men cannot be saved, at least a few can be civilized. And so saying, they have set sail for a splendid, sepulchral Byzantium.

These three writers, each an extraordinary stylist, fascinated by the idea of a distant or extinct redeemer, look to death with an interest bordering on fixation. Christians all, they move in solemn procession, not about the crib nor the site of resurrection, but over the burial ground past the tomb of their silent Lord on their way to the underworld. To some critic of the future their journey may appear to have been too carefully arranged—even mannered and eccentric like that of the Gothic revivalists at the end of the eighteenth century. In *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold* Waugh seems to anticipate this:

> It may happen in the next hundred years that the English novelists of the present day will come to be valued as we now value the artists and crafts-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

men of the late eighteenth century. The originators, the exuberant men, are extinct and in their places subsists and modestly flourishes a generation notable for elegance and variety of contrivance.

Waugh may very well be right. Although he probably didn't have the "graveyard school" in mind, one does sense some of the familiar pleasures of melancholy in his books. Even Greene, in the last decade, has tidied up his morbid obsessions and made of them something more craftsmanlike, presentable, and predictable than they once were. Outrage, passion, bitterness, disillusionment have all somehow converged and solidified into something like a grim posture for these three writers. Some literary critic a hundred years hence may well look back upon the grand Augustan ironies and baroque despondency of the mid-twentieth century.

That there is a peculiar brilliance to their gloom is undeniable—a sense of rhythm, wit, and the just phrase which makes following them on their dark journeys not altogether bleak. The shadowy places are apt to sparkle with amusing dialogue and effulgent descriptions. One begins to feel guilty for enjoying the trip so much. Yet it shouldn't be necessary to apologize for preferring a sophisticated and entertaining guide—even in hell.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

DAVID L. STEVENSON

The Activists

A SPECIAL KIND of novel has emerged out of the serious American fiction written since the war, with a distinct and definable identity of its own. In its structure and verbal styling, in the nature of its substance and, most important of all, in its way of looking—its view of the individual human predicament—it is a kind of artistic mutation or sport. The outlines of this new fictional entity were first sketched by Saul Bellow in his short story "Notes of a Dangling Man" (*Partisan Review*, Sept.-Oct. 1943), later turned into a short novel. In its fully developed form as a separable variety of the modern novel, it is at its most representative in the work of Saul Bellow, Walker Percy, Herbert Gold, Bernard Malamud, Monroe Engel, James Baldwin, and Philip Roth. A reasonably accurate label for it is "activist" fiction because its major concern is with the active self-consciousness, the active self-awareness, of characters full of high energy who are intellectual migrants from the norms of domestic morality and ambition in a closed, money-making society. Its Augie Marches (Bellow's *The Adventures of Augie March*), its Burr Fullers (Gold's *The Optimist*), its S. Levins (Malamud's *A New Life*) are ontologists all, avid investigators into the essential qualities of the events and the human relationships that chance their way. Unlike Hemingway's Robert Jordan or Faulkner's Joe Christmas, who finally surrender to fates imposed by the conditions of society, the new activist hero remains to the end an intrepid opportunist of the self. He is an eager, insatiable explorer of his own private experience, always on the alert, in Augie March's phrase, for "a fate good enough" to vindicate the energy spent on the exploration.

Characteristically, as in its archetype "Notes of a Dangling Man," this new fiction has little of the formal structure which we associate with the American novel of the first half of the century. We find in

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

it no central character, or series of characters, moving after the fashion of Fitzgerald's Gatsby and Daisy Buchanan, of Hemingway's Frederic Henry and Catherine Barclay, from a carefully specified beginning "in medias res," through a climactic situation, to a final denouement, a very deliberate and very conclusive moment of stasis. Rather, we view the characters of this activist fiction as investigating the excitements and the turmoil in their emotional relationships with others during a series of time segments, with no sense that one episode in time has a traditionally novelistic, formal, and progressive relationship to the next one. At the end of the activist novel, the characters have completed their researches into a worthwhile, personal fate and, with Augie, Burr Fuller, and S. Levin, each has achieved a modest and tentative plan for his future. But the ending is, structurally, indeterminate and gives us a feeling of conclusion only because it has exhausted our interest in the factual details of its characters' quests.

In matters of style, all the writers of this new fiction share a kind of identity. They have made no attempt, I think, to create a highly idiosyncratic rhetoric of their own after the separate fashions of Faulkner and Hemingway. Yet they do not write the neutral, urbane, standard English of twenty years ago as found in the work of Willa Cather, and as surviving today in the work of Mary McCarthy, Jean Stafford, or Truman Capote. The activists write an extremely informal English, an easy, unforced mixture of the vernacular and the vulgate in their characters' conversations or thoughts, and only a slightly more formal English when the focus shifts to the point of view of omniscient author. With Bellow, Gold, and Roth, the quality of the style itself adds a special dimension of the comic or the sardonic. The odd, verbal quirks of these three are usually found in the thoughts of the teller of the story, the created, omniscient persona, who surveys the action with a heightened, often brash wit. This stylistic wit seems to be achieved by creating a slangy sentence movement into which is tossed a jumbled assortment of literary or philosophic details, images, sententious observations or implications. Representative of the Bellow-Gold-Roth yoking together of the conventionally unlike in tone and feeling in order to create a verbal-intellectual dissonance is Augie March's description of his ideal home:

> What I had in mind was this private green place like one of those Walden or Innisfree wattle jobs under the kind sun.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In substance, this activist fiction is almost wholly concerned with the details of a central hero's energetic quest. The peculiarity of this quest is that the hero, unlike his counterpart in more formal fiction, does not seek for conclusive, irreversible outcomes from specified predicaments. The activist hero is, rather, involved in a more nearly aimless search through the endless clutter of everyday existence for a sense of a privately satisfying identity or self. He is a person who has escaped from the easy and arbitrary patterns of ordinary living into a condition of active intellectual awareness, of active "beingness." He is a comical-tragical, free-lance reporter of private "meanings," "significances" in his own life. But he has also escaped into an ironic state where he recognizes that his intellectual autonomy in any series of events—more often than not erotic ones in this new fiction—is largely a way of looking, a state of awareness, and not a means of manipulating events.

This new hero is always alert, always on the lookout for changes in experience, and hopes for fresh perceptions. As he is represented by Bellow and company, he has little concern for the ordinary regulations of society beyond obeying its traffic lights to avoid obvious trouble. His real concern is with his privately hoping, socially nonconforming, existential self. And the repetitive irony of this concern is that this self, this Augie March, this S. Levin, is a caged self. Its autonomy is nearly limited to its own consciousness of its own fluttering behind the bars of a nature-nurture determinism. The heroes of this fiction work their way through the normal predicaments of their lives or through the invented ones, in Bellow's *Henderson the Rain King*. But since they themselves can only shift their sense of being with a shift in the chance circumstances, the chance environment of that being, they are shown as never finding permanent solutions to their problems. The anxiety which haunts them is always for the immediate in their lives. They are observers of reality wholly in its moment-to-moment "nowness."

Part of the strangeness of the activist novel, and an uncomfortable strangeness to many of its critics, resides in the inconclusiveness inherent in its way of regarding existence. Its heroes think of themselves, and behave, as if they had a strong, manipulative will, great powers of agency—consider Henderson's cries of "I want! I want!" Yet they also assume little responsibility for, or even connection between, their explorations and the effects of them on other people or on other happenings. The outcomes of their acts are assumed to be merely indeterminate products of an activist's innate feelings of

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

agency working against the frictions of his environment. A harried activity goes on in a character's life until "something" just happens: until Augie finds himself married to an actress and living in Paris; until S. Levin discovers that he has taken over another man's wife and children, and is moving off into an as yet undetermined, but deterministic future.

The central characters of Faulkner's *Light in August* and of Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls* are still adrift in the old, guilt-ridden, post-lapsarian world where they are created as if "free to fall." The characters in such serious contemporary fiction as Styron's *Lie Down in Darkness* or in his *Set this House on Fire* continue to exist as studies in moral responsibility. The whole point to Mary McCarthy's comedies *The Groves of Academe* and *A Charmed Life* is that her characters can still be morally teased. But the Augie Marches, the S. Levins, the Burr Fullers have moved beyond the confines of the post-lapsarian view. They exist in the broad daylight of the post-Freudian world, sinless, guiltless unless they are ill, psychically determined, wholly concerned with their own special and private irritations, their own erotic needs; anxious, frantic as to the meaning for themselves alone of their adventures in love. They do not linger with used-up friendship or used-up love. They do not hang on to their commitments. When circumstances become too uncomfortable, they clutch boldly at the next propitious moment in time in the hopes of new excitements in the endless stretch of a constantly recurring present.

The activist novel has thus moved into a dimension or level of reality quite different from that found in our earlier fiction, one little concerned with the fact of death itself, and not at all with the nagging futility of things. People occasionally die in this new fiction. But they are usually the old, ripe people like Grandma Lausch in *The Adventures of Augie March,* Paul's father in Roth's *Letting Go;* minor weaklings like Weinstein and Cal Janus in Gold's *The Optimist;* or characters whose deaths create an archaic, pre-Freudian odor of guilt, as with the suicide of Rufus Scott, in Baldwin's *Another Country.* Tommy Wilhelm in Bellow's *Seize the Day* has his serious troubles. But he is no Joe Christmas, assuming his own guilt and his own need for the expiation of death. Tommy Wilhelm finds himself, at the novel's end, weeping deliriously at the funeral of a man unknown to him, sinking "deeper than sorrow . . . toward the consummation of his heart's ultimate need." But Tommy, the resolute activist, turns from death to tears. He holds the self and the immediate

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

event too sharply in mind ever to succumb to the Faulknerian tragic vision of individual man as caught in a vast, cyclic movement of all life into the dark.

A tragic view is foreign to this new, post-war fiction which is an artistic revelation of our post-Freudian concern with the individual self, highly conscious of agency, let loose to wander in a psychologically and physically deterministic environment. Activist fiction does not give us an out-and-out comic view of life. But it contains the powerful surge of the comic-sardonic, the "vis comica" inherent in any less than tragic look at human antics. Perhaps one can call it a middle view of things, sustained by a half-amused, a half-bitter tone. This portrait of characters trapped by reality only in its moment-by-moment immediacy shows them to be grinning and wincing, if not laughing creatures. They are all convinced out of opportunistic curiosity for what comes next that despite today's horror, tomorrow will be at least equally endurable. It may, perhaps, even allow them to stumble across something better. As Gold's Burr Fuller puts it, at the end of *The Optimist:*

> There is no place to live but here, before death. Dream of love and release, yes; but the only release from desire is gratified desire, not oblivion or immolation.
>
> Why not try more?

In "Notes of a Dangling Man," we find, in little, all the elements of structure and style and way of looking to be found in Bellows' and in his contemporaries' later full-blown novels. It has no formal fictional design, but simply presents us the events of three days in the life of its hero, Joseph, after he has quit his job and is waiting to be called into the army. The story is a portrait of Joseph's irritated and active sense of his own will, his own private self, as it grinds against the particular events of these three days. December 16 shows Joseph reacting to the dreary streetfuls of Chicago houses in gray winter, to his wife's aging parents, to his having been caught out in a queer moment in history in which a conception of self might possibly have no function. He, Joseph the dangling man, "would remain on the bottom and then, extinct, merely add my body, my life, to the base of a coming time." December 22 shows Joseph asserting a freedom of the self against the assumed perfectability of social man, in an early version of the stylized mixture of the literary and the vernacular: "any hospital nurse did more for 'le genre humain' with one bedpan than they (the communist party) did with their entire organiza-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tion." December 26 shows Joseph asserting his emergence from the decorous norms of polite society and into the freedom of self in all its "nowness," by his publicly spanking a rich, bratty niece. His final assertion of agency for the day, and in the story, is his angry shouting at his sobbing wife.

With the exception of *The Victim* (1947), all of Bellow's novels to date have kept pretty much to the structure, the substance, the way of viewing a character in his private world, found in "Notes of a Dangling Man." *The Adventures of Augie March* (1953), his longest work, reveals Bellow's insatiable interest in the details of the appearance of things and his insatiable concern with the immediate reactions of his characters to these appearances. The novel relates a chronological accumulation of events over a series of years in the life of Augie, a Chicago boy "thrown for fair on the free spinning of the world" during the depression. Augie is always on the verge of a fate worthy his sense of self. It might have been his love affair with Thea, played out in Mexico. It might have been in his marriage to Stella and his life with her in Paris, at which point Bellow terminates his account. But Augie as activist hero lives only in the constancy of the oncoming present of this new fiction. And he would violate its structure and intent if he were to stand still long enough to recognize a worthy fate, even if it should touch him in passing.

Bellow's much shorter work, *Seize the Day* (1956), catches its central character Tommy Wilhelm during a few of the bleakest hours of his awareness of being, when he is energetically, if fearfully, interrogating the facts that he is out of a job, behind on his payments to his wife, has lost his last cash on a mad gamble, and is utterly rejected by his well-to-do father. Tommy Wilhelm reaches a moment of intense feeling during which he cries out to himself that his estranged wife and Tamkin, the phony, who has clipped him for his last two hundred dollars, "ride on me with hoofs and claws, tear me to pieces, stamp on me and break my bones." But minutes later, caught up in the swirl of a crowd pressing into a funeral parlor, he himself weeps, sinking into a "happy oblivion of tears," his consciousness of identity re-inforced, freed presumably to face the next chance at money or at love which fate will toss his way.

Henderson the Rain King (1959), Bellow's most recent activist novel, shows the same exuberance as his other fiction for the endless elaboration of the details of place and for the moment-to-moment interpretations of the significance of the events against which its hero reacts. Its central character, Henderson, is set down by Bellow in an

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

imaginary Africa where he has a string of comically and intellectually illuminating adventures. And Henderson, like the earlier Joseph, like Augie, like Tommy Wilhelm, moves from experience to experience, restless in his autonomy, in desperate quest for some event to "happen" against which he can exercise fully and satisfactorily a personal sense of will, of agency. At the novel's end his mood is a cheerful one. He has had his African excitations and his chaotic intellectualizings about them. He is flying back to America, in possession of a lion cub with symbolic meanings for him; he has met an orphaned child on the plane who speaks only Persian and who fascinates Henderson because he can communicate with the child only by intuition and gesture. Henderson is floating, dangling, in a guiltless, sinless enjoyment of the hilarity of "being," alert with pent up energy, ready to engage whatever may show up for him in the onrushing "nowness" of time.

When we turn to examine Herbert Gold's fiction, we find that the central characters in his first three novels, *Birth of a Hero* (1951), *The Prospect Before Us* (1954), *The Man Who Was Not With It* (1956), are ontologists like Bellow's Joseph and Augie March, active investigators into the nature of the self. But all three early novels have the formal structuring of traditional fiction. They all reach moments of definition, of conclusiveness. In Gold's *The Optimist* (1959), however, the activist novel emerges in its completeness. His central character, Burr Fuller, moves his ever-questing, free-floating psyche through college sex, through war, through a political campaign, through a suburban marriage and divorce. The confrontations between Burr Fuller's awareness of identity and consciousness of agency, and the specifics of the environment against which, or within which, he is momentarily snagged, are often bitterly humorous. But his concept of "being" is that one does not exist to reach conclusions and then to become a thing of the conclusions. It is rather that one exists to continue to investigate the possibilities of the next phase of the recurring present. In such a novel there can be no denouement because its function is to demonstrate the inconclusive. And Burr Fuller's final words, addressed to himself, are not unexpectedly "More! More! More!"

If one allows for the obvious and necessary differences in style and tone, one may say, I think, that Bernard Malamud in *A New Life* (1961), Walker Percy in *The Moviegoer* (1961), Monroe Engel in *Voyager Belsky* (1962), James Baldwin in *Another Country* (1962), and Philip Roth in *Goodbye, Columbus* (1959) and in *Let-*

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ting Go (1962), are the only other serious writers contemporary with Bellow and Gold who have written fiction wholly within the activist formulations. Norman Mailer's strong feeling for the individual's subordinate role in society and strong commitment to the formal design of the traditional novel removes him from the mainstream of this new fiction. But one does find more than a trace of the ontologist of the ever-present in the central characters in both his long story, "The Man Who Had Studied Yoga" (1956), and in his fragment of a novel in progress "The Time of Her Time" (1959). Salinger's *Catcher in the Rye* (1951) presents us an avid investigator into the relationship of the self with other people and with chance events. But the novel returns to sentiment at its end, with the frictions between the agent Holden Caulfield and his environment resolved in a loving truce. George P. Elliott's *Parktilden Village* (1958) has something of the chronological drift and something of the way of looking to be found in the activist novel. But his heroine Jackie, a modern explorer of states of being, of the private self as it confronts each day's take of event, makes decisions and resolutions, reaches a final moment of novelistic denouement. Moreover, like Mailer, Elliott lets us be too conscious of the didactic implications of his *Parktilden Village* to keep it wholly within the activist tradition.

Bernard Malamud's novel *A New Life,* though not his other work, is a true variant of this new species. It relates the chaos of one year in the existence of S. Levin, "formerly a drunkard" as the first sentence tells us, as he attempts the new role of instructor in a state college in the Northwest. He is the actively self-conscious hero of the daily problem, poking about in his morning's and his evening's ration of events to test whether he himself can be a mover of some person or some action, rather than one wholly moved by them. After a medley of academic battles and a medley of sexual ones, he still does not know whether he is the eater or the one being eaten. The final project of his year, and one filled with sardonic comedy, is to run off with another man's wife and children. But the possibilities for his nightmare dreams of autonomy in the happenings of the ever present, which keeps rushing to meet him in wild abandon, are left properly unresolved at the novel's end.

Walker Percy's *The Moviegoer,* concerned with a central character Binx Bolling who abstains "from the customary ways of making do,"[1] and Monroe Engel's *Voyager Belsky,* whose titular hero surrenders himself to "the haphazard, incoherent roar of chance," are also written well within the formulations of activist fiction. Percy's

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Binx, casual seducer of office secretaries, a drugged moviegoer in order to escape being "locked in the death grip with everydayness," floats, like Belsky, in a condition of sustained shock: almost everyone that he knows seems to think that the conventional world makes sense. But where Percy's Binx conducts a branch office stock and bond business as a shield against daily meaninglessness and despair, Engel's Belsky takes to any road leading anywhere. Neither man can endure being backed into a corner where he must celebrate existence as ritualized by his contemporaries. At the end of *The Moviegoer,* Binx Bolling has married his neurotically suicidal cousin, a person even more sensitive than he to "everydayness" as the mortal enemy. Belsky the voyager, after a cold winter on an island off the coast of Maine where he has had a comfortless sexual adventure with a woman dying of cancer, returns to his New York wife. Both men have survived the events that have come their way. Both men remain conscious of themselves as merely perceptive agents who have been exploring happenings which, in themselves, have little significance beyond the fact of their having happened.

James Baldwin's *Another Country,* like *A New Life,* is in structure, in substance, in point of view, still another somewhat individualized version of this new fiction. Because it concerns Negro and white racial problems in New York, *Another Country* gives the appearance of being one more sociological novel, a post-war *Grapes of Wrath.* But the heart of the novel is the battle between the active, eager self, Negro or white, and its environment. Baldwin, indeed, follows closely the pattern initiated by Bellow, except that he is insistently more grim in his own look at the caging of the conscious self. The suicide of the young Negro Rufus in Part One of the novel, the homosexual exploits of Eric in Part Two, the reorientation of the sexual lives of all the characters in Part Three, are not presented as the half-comic, half-bitter result of an Augie March's examination of the chance debris that comes his way. Rufus kills himself because he is a Negro, because of the caged environment within which his free, choosing, active self must make its decisions. Eric pursues the homosexual because of early experiences. Cass, who has a temporary heterosexual affair with Eric, leaves her husband Richard because he has written a popular novel to conform, to make money. Rufus, Eric, and Richard are not blamed for the selves with which they were born, nor for the chance area of experience within which their selves try to function. In Baldwin's view, however, the determinism of self in conjunction with event is harsh and absolute. The activists of

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Another Country are not solvers of their momentary problems, but men and women solved by them.

Philip Roth's short novel *Goodbye, Columbus,* and his very recent and very long one, *Letting Go,* are the final examples of activist novels. They give us portraits of characters in the ontological mode, men and women constantly sorting through the happenings of their lives for some kind of experience of the nature of their own "beingness." *Goodbye, Columbus,* a minor story, concerns the attempt of its hero to force a young girl with whom he is having an affair to drop her passivity as the woman seduced. The modest irony of the novel is that when she becomes an activist herself and emerges, blinking, into the daylight of autonomy, it is too bright, too frightening for her and she dismisses her lover.

Letting Go is a much more complex study of its chief character, Gabe Wallach. It is also much more somber in tone. As in the work of Bellow and Gold, the somewhat stylized rhetoric of *Letting Go* helps create the sardonic tone of the explorations of its characters' experiences. Sufficiently typical, I think, is Gabe Wallach's description of his love-making with a girl from Wisconsin who has chanced his way:

> I held the girl and kissed her and soon enough the two of us were revolting against Kenosha as though Caligula himself were city manager.

The hero's quest, in *Letting Go,* more like that of Binx Bolling and S. Levin than that of Augie March or Burr Fuller, is to find some momentary oasis of quiet, of standing still, in the perpetual flux of emotions and events which make up his life. Gabe Wallach finds that he is partly in love with a friend's wife Libby and that he is partly happy in a long, bickering affair with a divorcee on the fringe of academic life in Chicago. At the beginning of the book, Gabe is concerned with his inner feelings of will and agency, eager to make "brave decisions," fascinated by the viability of choice. At the novel's end, dismissed by his mistress, turned upon by Libby, he sees himself as beyond good and evil, beyond praise or forgiveness. He is merely the semi-autonomous self of a man who has been caught in wave after wave of the constantly occurring present, swimming a little and surviving in it.

When one attempts to evaluate the individual achievements of writers of activist fiction, one finds oneself wholly in the realm of the immediate and the tentative. My own guess is that only Saul Bellow

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in *The Adventures of Augie March* has attained a ripe, artistic perfection in this new variety of the novel. Mailer, Salinger, and Elliott merely flirt with its substance and its view in passing. Herbert Gold in *The Optimist,* like Percy in *The Moviegoer* and Engle in *Voyager Belsky,* writes in a minor mode. Malamud, in *A New Life,* contaminates the purity of his hero's genuine activist quest by large intrusions of didactic discourse on the inadequacies of state college education. Baldwin's special limitation as a writer, in *Another Country,* is that he insists upon violating the reader by bringing him visually and tactually too close to the act of sex. It is an insistent boldness rather for its own sake than for any special revelation or insight into the thoughts of his characters. Roth's *Letting Go* is too loose a novel; at times, the reader cannot understand even the surface motive and purpose of his characters. We follow with interest and some excitement the experiments in decision-making of the hero, Gabe Wallach. But the novel never makes clear what went wrong, for example, with the marriage of Gabe's parents. And there is no motive for the hero's sudden lunacy, in the final episode of the book, in which he attempts to retrieve a child adopted by Libby whom he partly loves.

Saul Bellow's special qualities as a writer, his insistent fascination with reporting in incredible detail the surface appearance of things, and his dissonant, exuberant rhetoric have given most of his work an extraneous excitement and dazzle not found in that of his contemporaries. But these qualities of his art, so often praised by his admirers, seem to me to function at their best and to be usefully in keeping with the characters he is creating, only in *The Adventures of Augie March.* His Joseph, his Tommy Wilhelm, his Henderson leave one slightly deafened. They are always on the verge of shouting about the "meaning" of life. The random energy merely turned loose in them seems, however, to be concentrated with artistic intensity in his Augie March. This loud, brassy observer of the world of the living survives outside the novel in which he was born, as our symbol of contemporary man—comical, anxious, flinching, but tireless in his secular quest for a worthy fate.

Bellow's *The Adventures of Augie March* not only represents this new activist fiction at its best, artistically; it also represents it at its clearest as flowing from a view of the nature of things which we recognize to be peculiarly a view of our own time. In substance, this fiction consists in portraying the temporary results of encounters between an average, intellectual man, an Augie, and his random assort-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ment of experiences, sexual or otherwise. The experiences themselves are conceived as occurring in an endless moment-to-moment discontinuity. Once we step outside the easy patterns of contemporary living, defined most eloquently by the society pages of our newspapers, once we leave the safe arena where, in Gold's words, women are "getting brightly married to well-brushed men,"[2] we enter a new level of concern for the human condition. It is this level which is exploited in activist fiction. It is one in which the bareness, the strangeness, the uncomfortableness of existence is seen to be part of an ineradicable conviction of the nearly comical, nearly intolerable limits which reality imposes on an individual's inner urge to exercise his will, his feelings of agency.

Bellow's Augie is something of a comic artist, and falls back into laughter at the end of his recorded adventures. Baldwin's Eric falls back into more sex; Gold's Burr Fuller demands "more" experience. Percy's Binx Bolling and Engel's Belsky are tentatively married. Roth's Gabe Wallach takes a trip by himself, and Malamud's S. Levin takes a trip with another man's wife. The activist hero sustains himself by his commitment to a sense of the transient. He inhabits a very real modern world, quite cold, beyond comedy, beyond tragedy.

References

1. From the citation of the judges, in giving *The Moviegoer* the National Book Award, 1962.
2. Quoted from the MS. version of Gold's new novel *Salt*.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

DAVID LITTLEJOHN

The Anti-realists

THE ANTI-REALISTIC NOVEL—the novel of fantasy, illogicality, and absurdity—represents a dark and powerful underground current in the stream of modern fiction: "underground" not only in the sense that such novels go so often unread and unregarded, even by those whose business is fiction, but also in that the best of them can present, with a sometimes compelling force, the dream-life of a civilization, the nightmares and visions of an age. If the realistic novelists represent man awake, man active and thinking, the anti-realists are attempting to re-create, in their troubled and often difficult fictions, the no less revealing life of the dreaming, subconscious self.

Unlike the French anti-novelists or even the Southern Romantics, the anti-realists are members of no national school, no coherent and continuous system of influences and imitations. Classics of the genre have been written in Prague, Trieste, Montevideo, and even Hollywood; and many of its living masters have doubtless never heard of one another. Nor does the title signify only an historical reaction, a war against "realism," however defined, though doubtless just such a conscious reaction afforded a source of propulsive energy for many of its authors. The anti-realists, as we shall see, share many characteristics, but essentially they may be recognized by one—a radical and willful distortion of the nature of real experience, a distortion commonly made in the manner of dreams or other manifestations of subconscious experience. These novels may be regarded as the fictional counterpart of abstract painting, of the surrealist film, or, most recent, of "The Theater of the Absurd"—of all modern movements, in fact, that take as their basis an extreme manipulation, even a total elimination, of the expected, everyday forms. As their brother-artists have rejected conventions of the theater or mechanical perspective, the serious novelists of anti-realism have

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

found themselves compelled to abandon many of the expected elements of realistic fiction—structures of cause and effect, a coherent plot (or any plot), setting, motivation, or characters in any recognizable sense, even syntax and logic altogether—in order most vividly to express and to dramatize their central concerns.

Although the origins of modern anti-realism may be traced back to any number of nineteenth-century works, its real first generation is represented by James Joyce, Franz Kafka, and the French Surrealists. Their masterpieces—the Nighttown sequence of *Ulysses,* Molly's dream, parts of *Finnegans Wake; The Castle,* "Metamorphosis" and several other Kafka tales—are still among the most vivid dramatizations of subconscious experience ever penned.

The second generation, only slightly less distinguished, may be represented by such writers as Djuna Barnes, Malcolm Lowry, Nathaniel West, and Henry Miller; and to some degree William Faulkner. The third generation, those practicing today, would include among the "pure" anti-realists Samuel Beckett, Jorge Luis Borges, John Hawkes, and Joseph Heller; and, among the "marginal" anti-realists, in whose work willful distortion and subjective fantasy also play a major role, writers like Lawrence Durrell, William Golding, J. P. Donleavy, and Vladimir Nabokov. It is in particular to this third generation, to the major contemporary writers in the "mainstream" of anti-realism, that I wish to devote my attention.

Samuel Beckett, a Paris-based Irishman now writing in French (which he then translates into English), has perhaps the most valid claim to classic stature among the anti-realists writing today. Although best known as one of the three leading figures, with Ionesco and Genet, in "The Theater of the Absurd," Beckett has also written six novels and several shorter works of fiction.

Those familiar with Beckett's plays, notably *Waiting for Godot* and *Endgame,* will be aware of the single subject of his concern: the existential predicament of man. The Essential Man, man stripped and alone, has been from the start his only character and concern, in the plays and novels alike. The plays, simpler and more accessible than the novels, stress the dramatic *image* of desolation. They attempt to elicit a profound and immediate response of emotional conviction, through a gripping if unexplainable sequence of dreamlike events onstage: bums on a road, waiting for they know not what, trying desperately to fill up the day with meaningless music-hall chatter; sadistic masters unable to stand, idiot servants unable to sit,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

stumps of parents mouldering in ashcans—all closed up in a room with nothing outside. It is with images such as these that Beckett, as a playwright, makes his dreams—and tries to make them ours.

There is a limit, however, to the value of purely emotional communication. Beckett has more to say than the dramatic form allows. What his plays can only present as stark, immediate experience, the novels can both dramatize *and* discuss, discuss with a more rigorous honesty and a more painstaking thoroughness.

His first novel, *Murphy,* was written in English in 1938. The richness of the novel for the reader today is almost entirely that of its language and its humor. It is full of splendid high-comic nonsense, Marx-Brothers dialogues, and ludicrously rhetorical clichés. But even in this "juvenile" work, one can find the pattern of things to come. Murphy's longing for the will-less, silent dark, his serious wishing for the "little world" of the lunatics, the madhouse setting itself: all suggest the more thoroughgoing rejections ahead.

By his second novel, *Watt* (written in 1941, but not published until much later), Beckett had abandoned even the vestigial plot, setting, and characters of *Murphy.* His novels from now on were to be simply investigations of a state, rather than narratives of action. Each of his title-men henceforth was to find himself lost in a dream-like nowhere, "without memory of morning or hope of night," performing a few pointless, repetitive gestures and talking endlessly to himself.

Watt, although the first of these more "serious" novels, is not worthy of general attention. It is a literary experiment almost devoid of content, an elaboration of meaninglessness into two hundred and seventy pages, and represents a stage in Beckett's technical development rather than an achievement of any consequence in its own right.

Had he stopped after *Murphy* and *Watt,* Beckett might still be only a footnote in the biographies of Joyce. But in five years of astounding productivity upon his return to Paris after the war, he went on to write not only *Waiting for Godot* and *Endgame,* but also all three novels of his trilogy (*Molloy, Malone Dies,* and *The Unnameable,* 1951-1953), and the prose pieces (largely untranslated) included in *Nouvelles et Textes pour Rien*—all the work, in fact, on which his reputation rests today, as well as another novel and play as yet unpublished.

The three novels of the trilogy are all first-person monologues—continuous, compulsive monologues by voices endlessly questioning

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

themselves about the problems of being. This is not, be assured, empty drawing-room philosophizing: it is simply, as Beckett has arranged matters, the only subject left them to talk about. Beckett has reduced his characters to a state that is little more than mere existence in the case of the first two novels, mere "being" in the last. All they can do—these three characters who are, he admits, really all the same, really all Beckett—is to keep trying either to invent stories out of nothing, to fill up the day with nonsense, or to find out (a hopeless task) just who, why, and where they are. The implication, of course, is that we ourselves, however thickly we may have built the wall of civilized distractions over our own Beckett-like innermost selves, can do little more.

Beckett's trilogy is virtually barren of "events" in the customary sense. The few there are—and the hungry reader grasps for them—are either too dreamlike, or too sordid, or too foolish to afford much satisfaction. The narrators' strangely captivating, highly personal tones of voice may help in some way to make up for this paucity of events, as may the rich incantatory rhythms, the occasional touches of humor, the dirty words. But for works so difficult, often so tiresome, so ostensibly barren and distasteful, this may scarcely seem enough for the average reader.

The real reward of Beckett's major novels is something deeper and more durable than the usual satisfactions of story or style. By reducing man to this minimal, essential self, he is able to dramatize quite vividly a metaphysical anxiety he feels to be universal. No one, he hopes, can quite escape *some* feeling of kinship with his decaying, basket-case philosophers: stripped of our own inessential accretions, he is saying, we might be much the same. It is the paradox of Beckett's dreamlike, difficult narratives that they may gradually hypnotize the reader into a sense of ice-clear awareness—awareness of a "reality" more profound by leagues than our objective, everyday fact.

Beckett is a twentieth-century "philosophical Poet," dramatizing, through his plays and novels, a deeply-reasoned and deeply-felt Existentialism, as writers like Dante and Goethe and Hardy have dramatized the philosophies of their times. In the novels, as in the plays, he makes constant use of inspired physical metaphors for metaphysical states; but in the novels he is also able, in the voices of his oppressed, universal title-figures, to define more explicitly his sense of this total human desolation.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A second "philosophic" anti-realist, though of a different order entirely from Beckett, is Jorge Luis Borges, the Argentine writer with whom he shared the Prix International des Editeurs in 1961. Following the award, two English translations of his enigmatic little *ficciones* have appeared, and he has finally gained, at sixty-three, serious international attention. One of his American publishers, at least, is now suggesting him for the Nobel Prize.

Borges is vastly more accessible than Beckett, far easier to read. His standard format is a simple, densely-packed narrative of from five to ten pages in which, almost unfailingly, he manages to present a fully-imagined new world, an order of reality radically different from our own. Beckett's anti-realism is achieved through a reduction and intensification of reality; Borges' through a radical and systematic distortion. Beckett's philosophic statement is made directly through the commentary of his suffering narrators, or by means of some vivid dramatic image of an existential state. Borges, instead, works through "parables," elaborately strange and other-worldly. Although a serious, even an Olympian insight into things, an evaluating and questioning is certainly present in Borges' works; and although his remarkable imaginings must violently extend the reader's own imagination, I cannot, in the last analysis, think him as serious a writer as Beckett or as expressive of the same sort of contemporary significance. Too often his rare imaginings seem only brilliant, philosophic little games.

Unlike most anti-realists, the essence of Borges' meanings can be communicated in the "plot"—there is, after all, little else. The writing is explicit and pure; the dreams or imaginings are recorded with an almost pathological insistence on factual documentation. In order to establish the veracity of his fantasies, Borges often devotes half or more of his scant space to an elaborate, straight-faced structure of footnotes and scholarly authorities—the manner recently adopted by Vladimir Nabokov in *Pale Fire*. At the start such pretenses may help to beguile the reader into a suspension of disbelief, but they eventually appear only as another element in the elaborate game-system that Borges apparently needs. The insistently authentic, reportorial tone is, like other of Borges' qualities, strongly reminiscent of Kafka: Gregor's metamorphosis is related with the same strangely uncolored detachment.

The primary element of anti-realism in Borges' fictions is this creation of new orders of reality. Borges details his worlds with such meticulous albeit economical care that, often before we have finished

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a page, they are quite unquestionably "there." The mere fact of their existence on the printed page becomes evidence for their conceivable existence beyond—which is, in point of fact, one of Borges' major themes, the evolution of the imagined ideal into the real. In "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius," the most elaborately imagined of his fictions, Borges builds with great care and consistency a thoroughly documented universe of pure ideality, where "time" is a non-existent fancy, and nouns no more than metaphors, where ideas nudge themselves into existence and spontaneously create their opposites. Although the whole complex of documents from which Tlön was deduced, the reporter adds in a postscript, may be only part of an elaborate, centuries-old hoax, many of its invented details have already "intruded" into reality, been gradually discovered to exist in fact. A world anxious for order at any cost has yielded to the fantasy of Tlön, and the mysterious artifacts now being discovered are only the portent of a more universal yielding to come.

This manner of willing fantasies into being is particularly successful when Borges elects to incarnate more commonplace daydreams. The fancy that we may all be only characters in someone else's dream (immortally argued by the Tweedle-twins to Alice) must have occurred at one time or another to almost everyone. In "The Circular Ruins," Borges attempts to electrify it anew into fact. In "The Library of Babylon," one of the more oppressive and Kafkaesque of his parables, the author plays with the old speculation of the monkeys at their typewriters, eventually hitting out by accident all of Shakespeare's plays. The universe is conceived as a virtually infinite hive of cells, each filled with books, no two alike. Every possible combination of the letters of the alphabet has been printed and bound, and somewhere shelved. Somewhere, therefore, in this labyrinth of cells, one could find not only all the greatest (and poorest) books written and unwritten, but accurate predictions of every man's future, keys to the understanding of the universe, and directories, most valuable of all, to the Library itself. The task of course is hopeless: no one has so far found, to the narrator's knowledge, anything more than a word or two of sense in mountains of gibberish.

Borges appears to me the creative writer today most sympathetically attuned to the thinking of modern science. Many of his fables could almost be skillful dramatizations of the anti-materialism (anti-realism?) implicit in so much of contemporary experimental science. Posited particles lapse into reality and create their anti-material opposites, indeterminacy becomes a principle, and the universe a finite

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

but unbounded continuum of many dimensions. It is hard to say whose reality is the more fantastic, Borges' or the physicist's, or whose demands the greater leap of imagination.

The most important element in Borges' work may be best represented by contrasting "The Lottery of Babylon," his chilling allegory of the existing world of chance, with "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius," his vision of an ideal world of order. But even in these, ingenuity has as high a place as moral vision, and though troubling, the visions are forgettable. Ultimately, the greatest value of Borges' *ficciones* may be the exercise they require of a reader's own stiff, half-atrophied imaginative muscles, forcing them to stretch so far beyond the demands of a closed and traditional scheme.

The writer, since Kafka, who most purely offers a "distortion of real experience in the manner of dreams"—our basic definition of anti-realism—is the young American John Hawkes. He has written five short nightmare-novels: *The Cannibal* (1949), *The Beetle Leg* (1951), *The Owl* and *The Goose on the Grave* (1954), and *The Lime Twig* (1961). The first, which appeared when Hawkes was only twenty-four, I still find the freest, the most hallucinatory, the most intense, and in many respects the best. The next three seem to me an unfortunate decline. In *The Lime Twig*, Hawkes returns with full force to the nightmare-tone of *The Cannibal*, increasing the content of sheer personal torment, omitting the mytho-historical basis, and consciously using, for the first time, the shadow of a crafted, realistic plot.

The novels of John Hawkes not only defy any neat pattern of literary development, they have a way of defying criticism and evaluation altogether. Of the power and intensity of *The Cannibal* and *The Lime Twig*, there can be no question. Hawkes has no equal for the communication of revolting, inescapable terror. He is also skilled at the writing of a highly sensuous realism, shot here and there with gleamings from some kind of evil beneath. He has at times, particularly in *The Cannibal*, written with a language rich and incandescent, suggesting some of the wonder of *Nightwood*, Djuna Barnes's poetic masterpiece of the 1930's.

But much of the horror seems only willed, unnatural sadism; and Hawkes's hypersensitivity to ugliness, deformity, and decay may prove, I fear, an insurmountable block to otherwise willing and appreciative readers. The novels, on the whole—particularly *The Lime Twig*—are compounded of grotesquely unpleasant experiences, with

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

little of Beckett's redeeming philosophic vision. With a few important exceptions (to which I shall turn directly), much of Hawkes's high literary skill would seem to be expended in vain, unless there is value for the reader in undergoing an intense new realm of experience for experience's sake alone.

In *The Cannibal,* Hawkes had the wisdom to base his personal nightmare on a genuine historical nightmare, the abandoned decay of Nazi Germany after the collapse of her war. The novel progresses in a series of Joycean collages, simultaneous vignettes of a ruined and starving German town on a single day, interspersed with telling historical memories of its citizens now dying away. Although most of the sudden visions of terror and ugliness are not directly "translatable" as specific commentary on the war, together they do express and communicate a total and surely valid reaction. Nazi Germany in dissolution served Hawkes as a fine crystallizing point for his own images of horror—corpses rotting in swamps, talking monkeys frozen upright in the courtyard of an asylum in riot, starving wild dogs that chase and overtake a train, a cripple who projects the same film every night to a theater of empty seats, an old woman and an idiot mumbling together in the cellar of a mouldering house, an aged Duke—The Cannibal—relentlessly chasing a terror-stricken boy through the night. Even here, one may feel an unnecessary surfeit of diseased sexuality and "ashcan school" realism; but for the most part, such images are justified by the monumental horror of the chosen locale. The unpleasantness of the reading-experience may no more need defending than that of Chapter 27 of Shirer's *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich.*

The Lime Twig cannot be so readily defended by an historical analogue since its nightmare is primarily a personal one. But Hawkes has again found a quasi-surrogate for his strange imaginings, this time in the person of Margaret Banks, the pathetic English housewife who finds her tormented daydreams turning into unspeakable fact. He first establishes her as a simple *femme moyenne sensuelle* in a sordid London flat, then drags her gradually into a tragicomic hell of vague, unexplainable terror, fully in the manner of a dream. Once again, I feel, he goes too far; but up to the point where an excess of sadism detaches our sympathies with a jolt, Margaret's case is made poignant and painfully human.

In addition to such justifications as these, Hawkes's uncomfortable fictions may perhaps be defended by their mastery of anti-realistic techniques, if not for the general reader, at least for the novelist and

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

student of fiction. I can think of no better case-book in the re-creation of vivid and effective nightmare. Hawkes seems to know precisely what overlay of disease and sexuality, what strange dislocations of structure, what vague omissions, what tiny twists in the otherwise real, what imagery, what language, what tone can most effectively engage the root terrors of the deeper unconscious. More judiciously, sparingly used, and used to more thoughtful and consistent purpose, these elements may yet combine to make a novel not only of force but of lasting consequence.

Were one to base the entire case for anti-realism on a single novel, he could do no better than to choose Joseph Heller's *Catch-22,* an extraordinary first novel published in America in 1961. Heller's fantasy is nowhere so extreme as that of the three novelists preceding. It is, in fact, his very closeness to the truth that makes this extravagant novel at once so ludicrous, so painful, and so important. Heller's method is one of a grotesque and elaborate comic exaggeration of a "reality" bitterly tragic; but one forgets, one almost refuses to admit that any "exaggeration," any absurdity or anti-realism is being used, so undeniably just is the total effect.

Catch-22 uses for its universe a U. S. bomber squadron on a non-existent Mediterranean island in World War II. It is not a "war novel," except insofar as the war and army life accentuate so grotesquely certain basic human characteristics. Heller's island in war serves the same microcosmic purpose as Hawkes's asylum in riot, or Borges' lottery in Babylon—or, for that matter, as Thomas Mann's magic mountain or Katherine Anne Porter's ship of fools. In each setting, the condition of isolation and intensification helps to dramatize with clarity and conviction the author's bleak vision of human nature.

Heller's mad army-life setting proliferates as if naturally into bureaucratic nightmares and labyrinths of impossible nonsense. A living man is officially declared dead when the plane he pretended to be flying crashed; his pay is stopped, no one will feed him or talk to him, and his "widow" mourns in the luxury of pensions and insurance, disregarding the pleading letters some ghoul is sending in his name. A mess clerk takes over the war, and virtually the world, working for either side at cost-plus-six per cent, in what is at once fantasy so incredible and satire so true that it achieves the stature of myth. He bombs his own base under contract to the Germans, kills

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

his own men (each at a bounty), and defends himself on the sacred texts of the American business ethic.

Heller is obviously blessed with an imagination for incident and character of near-Dickensian dimensions, a profusion of exuberant fancy, and what appears at first to be a rich kind of Max-Shulman, Goon-Show nonsense. It rapidly transmutes into something much more serious, but even the nonsense has its point. In a manner comparable to the foolishness of Ionesco's plays, it can be seen as a reflection of the breakdown of language, the inability of men to communicate, and a pervading sense of a deeper *absurdité*. Without this façade of nonsense, Heller would most likely have been unable to express, and we unable to bear, his bitter, Swiftian anguish.

As it is, even with its veneer of brittle idiot-comedy, the book becomes increasingly painful to read. His fantasy and surreal exaggeration cannot hide for long the acid, anti-human depths of Heller's tragic vision. Anti-humanity, the quenching of one human soul by another, the refusal of each imprisoned ego to acknowledge even the identity of another, is Heller's major theme. Yossarian, his Alice-in-Wonderland hero, trying hopelessly to stay sane in an insane world, goes even further, and attacks the malicious, non-existent God he holds responsible for this moral chaos. But Heller has his hands full with man: inherent in every range of his absurd exaggerations, from the most trivial to the most dark, is this vision of inhuman, unloving man.

The great anti-realistic novels of the last generation, works surely no less distinguished or powerful than those just discussed, have never risen in popularity far beyond their limited coterie (excepting the always-exceptional case of Henry Miller, who is probably not being read entirely for his anti-realistic genius). Faulkner, of course, is only occasionally a novelist-of-the-subconscious, and generally a great deal more. *As I Lay Dying* (1930) and the "Benjy" sequence of *The Sound and the Fury* (1929) are the closest he has come to pure anti-realism, presenting as they do so graphically the hallucinatory or primitive points of view of the simple or the mentally deranged. As for the others, all three of the great anti-realistic novels of the 30's—Djuna Barnes's *Nightwood* (1936), Nathaniel West's *The Day of the Locust* (1939), and Malcolm Lowry's *Under the Volcano* (written in the late 30's, published in 1947)—have settled into a strong underground level of acceptance and admiration, which

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

is probably the most that can be hoped for any anti-realist smaller than a Kafka or Joyce.

Djuna Barnes's *Nightwood* is more poetry than fiction, one of the richest and most evocative works of poetry of our time. Few modern writers, of poetry *or* fiction, have manipulated the English language with such stunning and total effect. With works such as this, the old distinctions between poetry and prose have ceased to have meaning: selections from *Nightwood,* as well as from Joyce's *Finnegans Wake,* are contained in a leading anthology of modern verse. At core, the book, like so many anti-realistic works, is perversely and unpleasantly odd. It is a motionless case-study of the "Night People," the haunted, hallucinated world of the sexual invert. But the distasteful (although very real) Lesbian relationship about which the narrative plays is primarily a mechanism of release, a trigger for the lush Jacobean monologues of Djuna Barnes's deputy-spokesman, the un-shut-uppable, near-Shakespearean Doctor Matthew Mighty-Grain-of-Salt Dante O'Connor. *Nightwood,* admittedly, may seem decadent, degenerate, often sick and distasteful, a little too consciously *fin de siècle.* But most often it is poetry of the highest order and well worth the *malaise* that surrounds it.

Under the Volcano is another book wrung out of the author's own anguish, an alcoholic nightmare spun out over three hundred and seventy pages. It is a tortured, difficult tale of personal disintegration, which traces, through the fragmented nervous visions of the last day of a dipsomaniac British consul, the decline and fall of a social ideal. Though the reference is specifically to the Spanish Civil War, the implication is insistently universal. The non-existent but closely, hypnotically detailed Mexican city in which the consul's decay is set, affords the overpowering force to the book; and its primitive, hot bleakness becomes the setting for our own shattered and shifting nightmare. *Under the Volcano,* in a way, is a remarkable tour de force. Lowry has used, it would seem, every device in the novelist's handbag, has incorporated the styles and tics and gestures of any number of his colleagues and antecedents (notably Conrad and Joyce), and has studded his novel with phrases and allusions, in the Eliot-manner, from eight different languages and literatures. But the book is no mere derivative pastiche, any more than is *The Waste-land:* Lowry's socio-alcoholic vision has made it uniquely his own. The kaleidoscopic horror of the drunken consul set loose at a Mexican carnival, the macabre nightmares in which the consul and his

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

wife both meet their deaths at the end, are among the most extraordinary scenes in all of anti-realism.

Nathaniel West is still the most popular of the three, but, like Joseph Heller—who so very much resembles him in manner—his popularity will always be limited by the sour blackness of his satire. If Lowry and Beckett and Barnes may be traced, at least in some degree, to the impressive influence of Joyce, and Borges perhaps to Kafka, Nathaniel West can claim kin to the all-but-forgotten French Surrealists of the 1920's. His first novel, *The Dream Life of Balso Snell* (1927), was the purest surrealistic fantasy, an account of the travels of his dreaming hero inside the belly of a horse. His second, *Miss Lonelyhearts* (1934), remains to this day an almost perfect little piece of acid-etched grotesquerie. *The Day of the Locust,* his most ambitious work, is blessed with a setting ready-made for sardonic anti-realism: Hollywood, where the book was written. West makes of this already other-worldly setting something strangely misshapen, a little left-of-real, and then peoples it with minor monsters who are, like Heller's amateur hangmen, all too recognizably alive. Hollywood, like Heller's Pianosa, becomes through selection, confusion, and hyperdefinition "in the manner of a dream," West's microcosm of American society. A sequence of episodes, feverish and vaguely connected, carved in the most painfully careful prose, climaxes in a sort of modern Last Judgment, the screaming insanity of a Hollywood premiere.

Altogether, the experimental, anti-realistic fiction of our own time and the decades preceding represents a collection of high distinction. In the content and quality of its imaginative energy, of sheer original invention (if not in stylistic or structural control), it may be unequalled for a collection of novels of such size. And yet while anti-realism in the other arts (in painting, in the drama, in the film) has been accepted for so long it is now almost taken for granted, in the novel it has not been much more accepted than the Dadaist cults of the 20's. The man who professes to admire a surrealist or abstract painting, who can enjoy a Beckett or Ionesco play, a Bergmann or Cocteau film, will still balk at a reordering of reality surely no more radical in such novels as *Nightwood* or *The Lime Twig* or *The Unnameable.* Even serious critics often refuse to pay them regard.

The reasons are not hard to find. For one thing, as we have seen, the works of this tradition are, almost to a novel, perverse and ugly visions of human animals being skinned alive: they hurt. The hurt

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

may be salutary, reinforming, truth-giving, but it is unlikely ever to win for its perpetrators a wide appeal. There is secondly, as I have mentioned, a tradition of realism in the novel which seems by now to have incorporated itself into the common definition: the novel, for most people, is a realistic fictional narrative dealing with commonplace forms of experience. Anything else is simply not a novel. Third, and most importantly, the experience of reading a novel is different in kind from that of viewing a painting or play or film—a difference that works against the acceptance and effectiveness of illogical or anti-realistic content.

The "unwritten" arts work directly on the passive spectator, set in action responding emotive mechanisms both conscious and unconscious without any necessary intervening effort of will or intellection. One need not work, actively, to look at a painting or film: if the disoriented images (or non-images) of a Chagall or De Chirico, a Picasso or De Kooning duplicate some essential structure of our own unconscious, a felt resonance, rich with overtones, can be struck with efficient directness. The magnificent resources of the cinema render it the ideal medium for the re-creation of dream-experience, a potential that has been exploited by creative directors from Sjöstrom and Dreyer to Bergmann and Resnais. The classic surrealist films—Weine's *The Cabinet of Doctor Calegari* (1919), Bunuel's *Un Chien d'Andalou* (1928) and *L'Age d'Or* (1930), Cocteau's *Le Sang d'un Poète* (1930)—are perhaps best experienced, in fact, in a state approaching total though still receptive passivity, the state of the dreamer. Although the drama has traditionally been a literary form, more and more strongly is the "anti-literary" drama, the Theater of the Absurd (lately and handsomely chronicled by Arthur Esslin) rising in force and acceptance. As we have seen in the case of Beckett, here too the directly sensuous "outside" nature of the experience makes possible an immediate emotional communication, involving a minimum of conscious effort on the spectator's part.

By contrast, the experience of reading a novel—any novel—is necessarily one of willed and conscious effort. We cannot simply "dream" our way through nightmares-in-print, however desirable this may seem. We must stay awake, at least detached and rational enough to *read:* to keep translating the alphabetical symbols on the page into ideas. Only after this is done can any emotional communication take place. The process, obviously, is going to take more work than the passive ingestion of a film. And when added to this original effort is the often-frustrating task, common to all the "surrealist" arts,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of trying to elicit sense and significance out of apparent nonsense or distortion, it is perhaps less surprising that the anti-realistic novel remains, so generally, unread and unregarded.

What, then, about modern poetry? Are not precisely the same efforts demanded by the works of Dylan Thomas or Wallace Stevens or Ezra Pound? Indeed they are; and this similarity reveals one of the most important critical points that can be made about anti-realistic fiction. It is not, except in the most general sense, with the painters and playwrights and *cinéastes* that these writers ought most validly to be compared; it is assuredly not, as we have seen, with the traditional "novelists." The anti-realistic novelists are poets, primarily, and their methods, their outstanding technical achievements —the rhythms of Beckett, the images of Hawkes, the diction of Djuna Barnes—are the methods and the achievements of poetry.

This granted, the reader as well as the writer of anti-realistic fiction may be able to readjust his expectations to more reasonable terms. The reader should approach an anti-realistic novel anticipating all of the difficulties, but also all of the rewards, of abstract-impressionist, post-Poundian verse. And the writers and defenders of anti-realistic fiction may stop feeling cheated by the narrowness of their reception. The most, reasonably, that they can expect is the audience and acceptance of the Thomases and Stevens and Pounds, which is fairly limited itself.

But even on these narrower terms, are the anti-realists receiving their due? Joyce is surely read as much as T. S. Eliot, and Kafka more than Pound; but what of their offspring to the second and third generations? If it is true—and I suppose it is—that today's anti-realistic poets-in-verse receive, by and large, more attention than the poets-in-prose, one could of course explain that the latter simply aren't as good. That they show, on the whole, less polish, perhaps less precision, less finesse, I would grant; but I would claim also that they have more to say, and a greater richness of experience to communicate.

Another possible explanation is the comparative length: poetry, generally, comes in much smaller, more digestible pieces. Again, the alienating sordidness already discussed of so many anti-realistic novels has not yet so thoroughly overtaken modern verse. More fundamentally, we have not yet developed a critical language of any precision, comparable to that of the best new critics of poetry, to deal with the poetic qualities of *Nightwood* or *The Cannibal:* unable to discuss them, we ignore them.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Most fundamentally—to return to the point from which we started—there is a problem of names, of generic walls no one is yet quite ready to break down. A novel, Sir, is a novel; and poetry is poetry. And these are neither. Until the millenium proposed thirty-four years ago by Edmund Wilson (in "Is Verse a Dying Technique?"), when we shall drop such distinctions altogether, the anti-realistic novel will doubtless continue to find its way blocked by this inbred prejudice against literary bastardy.

The ideal solution, perhaps, for those authors who can achieve it, is to adopt the best of both possible worlds: to combine the expected satisfactions of realistic fiction—the tensions, suspensions, and resolutions of a plot, identifiably human characters and responses—with the rich resources of subconscious power in the anti-realists' domain. Monsters and humans can dwell in the same fictional world, and the world be the richer for it, as Dickens and Dostoevsky have shown. The "marginal" anti-realists of our time, particularly Lawrence Durrell, have been notoriously more successful than most of the writers discussed above; and a great part of their success is due precisely to this ability to combine the two realms, to draw on the power of subconscious visions in the midst of a detailed and recognizable world. Even so "traditional" a novel as *Ship of Fools* obtains remarkable added force from the presence of the two diabolic and other-worldly Latin children—nightmare-creations comparable to anything of the anti-realists.

The anti-realists' audience will continue to be small, at least no larger than their verse-writing confreres'; but one can surely hope that their means and materials, so powerful in their own difficult and disturbing works, will begin to feed more freely into the mainstream of traditional fiction.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

PETER BROOKS

In the Laboratory of the Novel

Il s'agit de décrire, et non pas d'expliquer ni d'analyser.
—Maurice Merleau-Ponty

THE RISE of the novel as a genre parallels the rise of realism as a philosophy and a literary attitude. Both the concept and its formal embodiment reached perfection in the century Balzac invented, the nineteenth. But the form contemporaneous to the Naturalist novel, the Symbolist poem, seemed to cast a longer shadow into the twentieth century, and by 1922 *Ulysses* appeared to have exhausted the resources of the realistic method. This landmark led critics to speculate that the novel had run its course and was entering the death agony with the society and the world-view which had engendered it. What was to come in the Thirties, Forties, and Fifties of this century gave little reason to gainsay such speculation. In France, the form most typically employed was the ironic *récit* so brilliantly exemplified by Gide and Camus; the apparatus of the novel was put increasingly at the service of the point of view. Subjective distortion of reality, symbolic characters and actions, the involutions of the narrative voice have tended to supplant an interest in what Henry James so aptly called "felt life." Further, in Europe, war and political battle have engendered ideological fictions in which the contours of reality are merely counters for the expression of a philosophical attitude. And critics have reiterated that the novel and Realism died together.

"Realism" is a question of interest, of a writer's desire to explore and describe the concrete phenomena among which man lives, at the same time that the writer records a man's moral or psychological history. Although he is no more "unselective" than any well-aimed

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

camera, the realist refuses to abstract or internalize what, in its externality, seems to him as irrefutable as Dr. Johnson's stone, and therefore important to man. There would seem to be a sense in which one could say that if the novel exists as a genre, it is because it permits a reconstruction of this phenomenological world, and by this reconstruction, a kind of direct, undogmatic, non-discursive criticism of life denied to other forms.

It is to this conception of the novel, it seems to me, that the group of French writers who have gained notoriety in the past few years under the label of "anti-novelists," "pre-novelists," or simply "new-novelists," want to return. Their return, however, is in no sense atavistic. It implies a trial of new techniques which take for their objective a re-apprehension of the real. As Michel Butor expresses it, "L'intervention formelle dans le roman, loin de s'opposer au réalisme comme l'imagine trop souvent une critique à courte vue, est la condition *sine qua non* d'un réalisme plus poussé."[1] The average contemporary novelist, who chooses, in Nathalie Sarraute's words, either to "faire du Joyce" or to "faire du Constant," is condemning himself to a conventional and limited apprehension of reality. She, Butor, and Alain Robbe-Grillet, in reviving "realism" as a revolutionary slogan, are calling for a new novel in which every work, through its experimentations, renews our vision of the world.

This sophisticated and intellectual realism takes, as the common denominator of its affirmations, the position of modern phenomenology: that an honest account of the human condition must resist all essentialist analysis and start with description—neutral, "objective"—of the phenomena which constitute the world. Since the designation of these phenomena is open to debate, the concrete solutions and reorientations proposed by these and other "new novelists" are, happily, thoroughly different. They are in closest agreement at their point of departure, in their common disgusts and rejections.

The author who has gained the widest audience as propagandist for the movement, Nathalie Sarraute, does not typify its aims, but her critical articles—the most important of which are collected in *L'Ere du Soupçon*—do reveal much of its program of liquidation. Her most frequently repeated attack is on the *personnage*, the character as he was developed in the nineteenth century, admirably expounded by E. M. Forster in *Aspects of the Novel*, and as he survives in the average novel published today. Her position in some ways echoes that expressed by Virginia Woolf in *Mr. Bennet and Mrs. Brown* so many years ago: the "round" character—here op-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

posed to "fluid," rather than "flat" characters—fully detailed and securely placed in his environment, no longer holds an intrinsic interest for the reader. More importantly, the "personnage aux gros mobiles," any character of an identifiable psychological motivation whose behavior we can encompass and understand, is as false and as boring as Arnold Bennet's circumstantially situated Edwardians. There is no such thing as a coherent psychological makeup, and a novelist must fight against his reader's desire to find one, his tendency to typify, to find simplifying and clarifying keys. Thus the *soupçon:* the novelist must operate with a distrust of his reader, must substitute for the normal relationship between character and reader, one of suspicion and evasion.

The modern novel's experiments with fragmentation and dislocation are posited on the assumption—even the necessity—that the character can and will be reconstructed as an individual of coherent composition, by a reader who thus wins a victory over an initial sense of loss and confusion. This reconstructed character is merely a disguise of the eminently bourgeois *personnage* who, according to Mme Sarraute, must be eliminated. She proposes to delineate character only in skeletal form, as a sort of coat rack on which to hang observations of the small psychological movements which she feels to be the essential constituent of reality and with which—rather than with a solid totality—we carry on our social intercourse.

As illustrated in her first book, *Tropismes*—originally published in 1939, long before the magic formula *nouveau roman* had been uttered—these essential particles are psychological tropisms, the reactions which, unnamed, unseizable, take place when two human beings come into contact—breathless, miniscule embarrassments, fears, hurts, diseases. Mme Sarraute's terms are intentionally biological: our psychic and social existences are full of microscopic animals extending their antennae, touching and withdrawing from those of others. Our more or less coherent conversations are constantly menaced by a *sous-conversation* which wells up through the surface to reveal our true, slimy thoughts and, since the passage from inside to outside is fluid and continuous, to destroy any hard outlines of character. The escape from this atomistic reality is in the verbal commonplace, the term which covers up individual differences, gives one the illusion of decisive solidity, and holds off the ever-imminent breakdown in polite communication.

Mme Sarraute has given powerful and continuously entertaining expression to this vision in all her novels, perhaps most successfully

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in *Le Planétarium.* As in *Portrait d'un inconnu* and *Martereau,* we are plunged into a world of petty motivations and movements in which one or two characters do emerge through the internal logic of what are at first, seemingly, autonomous atoms. But these tropisms remain the active agent; these biological particles track one another, looking for each other's weaknesses. An air of the detective story (even stronger in *Portrait d'un inconnu*) hangs over the proceedings, and we are ever waiting for an explosion which does not occur, a decisive act to purge the world. (This sense of *faux policier,* of reality constantly deceiving our expectations of violence and resolution, seems common to many "new novels," and can be thought of as their Quixotic stance toward the *romanesque:* see all Robbe-Grillet's novels, Butor's *L'Emploi du temps,* Claude Mauriac's *Le Dîner en ville,* Marc Saporta's *La Quête.*) The trouble with Mme Sarraute's fictions is that one eventually revolts against the willed banality: her studies have thus far been confined to the realm of the petty, her high artistry has been lavished on discussions of whether or not an oak door should have a chrome doorknob. Her refreshing hatred of the world she creates cannot always save it from the reader's indifference.

One cannot quarrel with another's vision of reality, but it can perhaps be advanced that Mme Sarraute's phenomena constitute too limited a world for her novels to realize Butor's "réalisme plus poussé." She seems rather to operate in a specialized zone of the subjective psychological novel, and in this she is at odds with the other important representatives of the "new novel." A Russian by birth, she is an admirer of Dostoevsky, and it is the involuted, self-torturing monologue of the underground man that her *conversations* and *sous-conversations* most resemble, while her characters' *louche* and uneasy relationships with the objective world remind one of Roquentin in Sartre's *La Nausée.*

In reviewing *L'Ere du soupçon,* Robbe-Grillet, while supporting her attacks on the novelist who behaves as if reality were "une chose connue d'avance," censured the affirmative part of Mme Sarraute's program as leading to the nullifaction of the world she had set out to rediscover.[2] He objects to her concern with *profondeurs* and her refusal to find a line of separation between the internal and the external. Robbe-Grillet is a man for whom the outside world exists as something hard, resistant, and "there." Conversation, the uttered word, has a weight and a contour which sharply separate it from our *sous-conversations;* it and the objective world from which it takes its

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

form constitute a reality which we ignore at our peril, and which the honest novelist should carefully transcribe. This, in methodological terms, means describe: man's environment, reduced to its essentials, is a collection of things, and the novel becomes rigidly phenomenological, "objective" in the sense that the object is the center of attention, while the social and moral superstructures—including the character—which both exemplify and conceal this basic term, are cut away.

Robbe-Grillet's starting point is that of an Existentialist, or of a Romantic: objects are "other," man is alienated from nature. Tragedy—including the tragedy of the absurd—arises from man's refusal to accept this otherness, his constant attempt to bridge the gap between himself and the objective world. Because we cannot believe in the total neutrality of our environment, we try to domesticate it by endowing things with a soul, then sense the agony of separation from this soul. But to Robbe-Grillet, "le monde n'est ni signifiant, ni absurde. Il *est*, tout simplement."[3] One must recognize—and here he takes the decisive anti-Romantic step—that the world is "other," and one must refuse, as the world refuses, its assimilation to human terms, the unhealthy emotional collaboration which results in "nausea."

To implement this refusal, the novelist has an obligation to be literal: the objects which he describes "seront 'là' avant d'être 'quelque chose'"[4]; their presence will precede their signification. The novelist must rigorously banish from his vocabulary all metaphorical language, since it inevitably implies a connection between the human and the objective realms: to say that sunlight is "fierce" or a town "nestled" in a valley is to prolong the life of a lie. In place of metaphor, Robbe-Grillet institutes a neutral, flat style in which he geometrically details objects as they impinge upon the eye and which totally refuses to engage in those character-revealing physiognomies of place exemplified by the celebrated Pension Vauquer. Sight, the most "objective" of our senses, completely replaces the synesthesic organs so carefully cultivated by poets since the Romantic period; reality is reduced to "non-significant" outlines, surfaces, and measurements by a glance that resists the temptation to Gestalt.

It is not for nothing, then, that Robbe-Grillet's most substantial achievement is entitled *Le Voyeur*, and that the novel led critics to foresee an "école du regard." A *voyeur*, however, is not simply a seer, a neutral observer, but victim of an obsessional state. In taking

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

as protagonist a psychopathic criminal, a man hopelessly alienated from the world, Robbe-Grillet is both underlining a situation he believes to be inseparable from the human condition, and doing something more, of which his critical theory, even in its recent modifications, does not give an adequate account. As Jean Ricardou has expressed it, "Les choses, marquées du refus de la conscience, se chargent de ce que la conscience refuse."[5] Mathias and the narrator do not attach emotional significance to the objects that the criminal glance details; they are not implicated in Mathias' mental condition. Yet these objects narrate his story: what we know of the rape, torture, and murder of a thirteen-year-old girl is only the objects used to commit the crime—a Sherlock Holmes procedure, but vastly expanded since even those objects which are not related through use to the protagonist tell the story of his emotions and actions. Despite the neutrality of the style, the mind's insistent description of certain things, its return to selected configurations of reality, is our clue to its movements and aberrations. For Mathias, the contemplation of a shining nickel-plated bicycle is an escape from confrontation of the act he has just committed: the organization of the machine becomes a substitute for the lost spatial and temporal organization of his day.

This protagonist thinks in terms of maps and clocks: from the start, he is scheduling and re-scheduling his day of selling wristwatches on the "île natale." The need to account for his use of time is imperative when it becomes apparent that a gap of forty or fifty minutes—in which he committed the crime—exists in the middle of his day; the crime, as Roland Barthes has well remarked, is known only as "une faille de l'espace et du temps,"[6] and is more important viewed as this fault in the phenomenological world than as the act of a psychopath. The failure to eliminate this gap in his alibi—which he is constructing as much for himself as for anyone else—is paralleled by his failure to keep memory images (rendered in terms of photographic shots of objective configurations) from obtaining the status of present time, of lived reality. The obsessive nature of these remembrances charges the objects which represent them. This rendition of an emotional state through objects which are there, remain neutral, yet reflect the state, makes Robbe-Grillet the exponent of a new and rigorous *style indirecte* which, as much as Flaubert's invention, renews our vision of reality.

If Robbe-Grillet's more recent novels have led critics to question the label "objective," originally so liberally accorded him, the reason

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

is that the technique of detailing the contours of the outside world has increasingly been put at the service of a subjective state. In *La Jalousie,* the subjective-objective paradox is pushed to an extreme: the language is geometrical, clinical, analytical; and the central character, the jealous husband, never appears; yet the language is the expression of his *regard,* which registers and reports the action of the novel. The protagonist is known only as a psychological condition; the condition is known at all only because we participate in his glance. The glance is of restricted scope since the condition, in externalizing itself, takes on the limitation of a physical *jalousie:* most of the impressions recorded are those obtained by looking through the slats of a shutter, so framed and incomplete. Never have we known so little about a protagonist; yet never have we participated so completely in his view of the world.

Even though Robbe-Grillet may be dramatizing affective conditions, his techniques and purposes are completely divorced from those of—to take an extreme example—a Surrealist. The world is not distorted by a subjective appropriation of it; emotion is projected against the world which, in its hard detail, remains the protagonist. His most recent novel, *Dans Le Labyrinthe,* seems a reply to those who have accused him of an unavowed interest in "psychology"; here his *chosisme* reaches paroxysm, and we are confronted with page after page of identical facades and streets intersecting at right angles. In his foreword to the novel, Robbe-Grillet states unequivocally that we are not to look for allegorical significations in the wanderings of this wounded soldier in a city about to be overrun by the enemy; we are to content ourselves with the gestures of reality. These lead us toward the end of the book to the roots of novelistic creation, in contemplation and revery over things: the narrator, and the inspirations of his tale, are briefly glimpsed. This glimpse is intriguing, but it is undeniable that we have suffered much boredom along the way. More exciting is the scenario—published as a "ciné-roman"—for *L'Année dernière à Marienbad,* which became a film under the direction of Alain Resnais.

The advantage of the cinema, Robbe-Grillet contends, is that, whereas in a novel objects tend to become reduced to their significances (e.g., an *empty* chair), on the screen they *are;* they have existence previous to, or at least contemporaneous with, their significance. And yet, the film *L'Année dernière,* more than any other of Robbe-Grillet's productions, has given rise to an infinite number of interpretations based on the assumption that at least one set of images shown

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

must present the unreality—or super-reality—of a dream world. That the scenarist and the director proudly admitted to differing interpretations of the film and encouraged each viewer to find his own, of course did nothing to combat the confusing analogies to Surrealism, anti-Realism, and Impressionism. The views are reconcilable when we consider the author's remark, in his preface to the scenario, that it is the story of a persuasion: whether "X" (Giorgio Albertezzi) is referring to a real past or inventing one for purposes of seduction, or liberation, of "A" (Delphine Seyrig), this past becomes present, takes on the contours of reality, and ends by persuading "A" of its truth. Dreams become realities: they must be concrete images before they will fix in the mind and have a persuasive force. Robbe-Grillet, it seems to me, has remained remarkably consistent in his view of the interplay of the mind and the world, and in his insistence that the material of the narrative was located in the latter.

These are the methods by which Robbe-Grillet has tried to "réagir contre ce flot romanesque, dit de l'analyse, qui a submergé le roman au point de passer sous silence la réalité au profit de pures abstractions."[7] The next move of the "new novel" perhaps seems paradoxical only at first glance: Butor returns to Balzac and the nineteenth century's greatest monument to itself, *La Comédie Humaine*. To label the facile conventional novel "Balzacian" is to miss the point that the realism of the *Comédie Humaine* represents the most revolutionary achievement in the history of the novel. Through the device of *le retour des personnages*—the cross reference whereby a fictional creation, a Canalis, becomes more charged with allusion and significance than an actual poet, a Lamartine—a unique relationship is established between the novel and the civil register it rivals: the novel becomes a concentric sphere within the sphere of real life.[8] The image suggests how much Butor's position differs from a "slice of life" theory: the internal relations of this created world will depend for their truth, not on external reality, but on the value of its own created life; yet they are exemplary of life outside the novel, an illustration and a lesson applied to it.

The novel's strength, according to Butor, lies in its tangency with real life and its formal separation from life. The novel is a description and a possible reading of reality: "le roman doit suffire à susciter ce dont il nous entretient. C'est pourquoi il est le domaine phénomenologique par excellence, le lieu par excellence où étudier de quelle façon la réalité nous apparaît ou peut nous apparaître; c'est pourquoi le roman est le laboratoire du récit."[9] It follows from the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

experimental nature of the novel that writing about life changes life: thus Balzac's composition of the *Comédie Humaine* altered his view of the two "eternal verities" in whose light he undertook it; the inner sphere began to adopt a revolutionary position in relation to the outer. The conventional novelist, serving up a tested fare, is immoral: "il se fait complice de ce profond malaise, de cette nuit dans laquelle nous nous débattons."[10] And the novelist's obligation to innovate is matched by the critic's responsibility to explicate the new relations between thought and reality which each new publication brings: "Ces relations ne sont pas les mêmes selon les romans, et il me semble que la tâche essentielle du critique est de les débrouiller, de les éclaircir afin que l'on puisse en extraire tout son enseignement."[11]

Written out of this deep moral purpose, this engagement with problems of the interpretation of experience, Butor's novels, despite their polish, often resemble—as Proust thought Balzac's did[12]—"anteromans," prenovels. They characteristically involve the attempt to capture reality in writing, and take as their protagonists men whose need to apply a literary organization and interpretation to life is imperative. Butor's books are not so much those his protagonists will write, or might have written, as renditions of the interplay between such novels and the reality from which they derive. Jacques Revel of *L'Emploi du temps,* Léon Delmont of *La Modification,* Pierre Vernier of *Degrés* all play variations on Butor's own statement, "Je n'écris pas les romans pour les vendre, mais pour obtenir une unité dans ma vie; l'écriture est pour moi une colonne vertébrale."[13] The difficulty and the drama arise when the spinal column won't cohere, when the world refuses reduction to writing; Butor's narrative then becomes, as well as the account of an attempt to organize experience, a judgment of the techniques therein employed.

Jacques Revel, Frenchman in the vast, wet, gray Manchester-like city of Bleston, undertakes his journal out of a sense of incomprehension and hatred, in a desire to understand what has happened to him in the seven months since his arrival. He begins one May evening to evoke and record his arrival in October: he must, in his day-by-day account, keep this seven months' gap from widening, must try to diminish it and make past time catch up to present time. But present time is itself in the process of modification. As Revel points out, the analogy is to a detective story: there is the present, the days of the judicial inquiry starting at the time of the crime, and there is the sequence of events leading up to the crime. The crime itself—if, indeed, there has been one—tends to get lost, and the mind remains

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

turned toward the past, seeking a coherent interpretation of it, while events continue to pile up in the present. Time strata cannot be separated and laid end to end; evocation destroys neat demarcations. Present time encroaches on the narrative of the past, distorts it, and the Bleston of the winter months, instead of becoming clearer, grows progressively more obscure and menacing, a "pieuvre grisâtre," Balzacian town-monster.

The imminent failure of Revel's narrative edifice makes him clutch at straws, false principles of organization and explanation, simplifying symbols found in a stained glass window picturing the story of Cain, in a tapestry of the Theseus legend, in a detective story called *Le Meurtre de Bleston* (subjective, objective, or simply locative genitive?), which, as a facile and melodramatic ordering of reality, plays the role of *Amadis* in *Don Quixote*. Some critics have maintained that the "point" of the novel is Revel's loss of the love of two English girls; not even this much can be said for certain, for the belated emphasis placed on the Bailey sisters seems, once again, an attempt to find an easy answer for his spiritual sickness. With the failure of Revel's narrative, we have to construct reality from the pieces we can find, and these do not always suggest that his interpretations are correct; we are thrown back on a pre-literary experience with which we must come to terms.

It is from an overattention to Revel's schemata and from a failure to perceive how the flux of a world reproduced modifies them, that F. W. Dupee can claim that *L'Emploi du temps* demonstrates the vitiation of life by the novelist's philosophy.[14] By the dialectic of the book, life asserts itself, claims its rights, takes its toll, without the narrator's being aware of it, an indication of the extent to which reality is "felt" and evoked. *L'Emploi du temps* is a richer book than the subsequent *La Modification*, which might be described as an "emploi du lieu," a superposition in the protagonist's mind of Paris and Rome, two modes of life, and a description of the way in which the concrete detail of a train journey between the two alters a life: Michel Leiris has called the book a counterpoint between an archetypal "voyage initiatique" and the "vérisme" or minute realism which differentiates it from the common version of the night journey.[15]

The book has gained justified notoriety from the narrative stance which Butor tests in it: the protagonist is addressed in the second person, as "vous," by a disembodied voice, a technique which immediately implicates the reader in the character's situation. Further, as Bernard Pingaud has observed, the device is one which seeks to

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

bridge the gap between a subjective I-narrative and the objective he-narrative: a narrator seeing himself as "you" is a subjective agent who has objectivized himself, become witness to his own acts.[16] The method emphasizes Butor's preoccupation with the interplay between subjective and objective man, the former struggling to wring meaning from the experience of the latter, who can only remain subject to experience. The novelist himself has lucidly accounted for the necessity of the innovation:

> Il fallait absolument que le récit soit fait du point de vue d'un personnage. Comme il s'agissait d'une prise de conscience, il ne fallait pas que le personnage dise *je*. Il me fallait un monologue intérieur en dessous du niveau du langage du personnage lui-même, dans une forme intermédiare entre la première personne et la troisième. Ce *vous* me permet de décrire la situation du personnage et la façon dont le langage naît en lui.[17]

As always with Butor, we are, plunged in the real, at the sources of literary creation.

It is consistent with Butor's view of the serious purpose of the novel that such a technique should be valid only within its immediate context, and should not be permitted to fix itself as an authorial mannerism. His latest novel, *Degrés,* employs totally different methods, principles of investigation, and its theme is hardly less than a whole culture. Its starting point is the attempt made by a *lycée* geography professor, Pierre Vernier, to compose a total picture of the life of his students, an account to be presented to his nephew, Pierre Eller, a member of the class, when he is grown up. The finished work should reveal the total sense of a year of life to one who could not understand it as a unit while he was living it. Vernier takes as his original structural principle a series of triadic familial relationships which he discovers or, more tenuously, posits, within the faculty and student body of the school. This provides a contact of three points; by knowing one, he hopes to encompass all three. But every verifiable fact exhibits the need for unverifiable ones to situate and support it, and Vernier must call upon his nephew to aid him in the collection of material. This collaboration quickly leads to a disastrous human exploitation, spying and a violation of friendships. Exploitation weaves itself into the very narrative structure of the novel: Vernier relates the mid-section of the book as if it were from Pierre Eller's point of view, an imaginative act at odds with his reportorial aims. The entire narrative, as Vernier realizes, is increasingly based on a lie, founded on the void; and violations of the supposed narrator's

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

vision and fund of information continually underline the falsity of the procedure.

The mobile truth of human motive and emotion continually undermines the organizing superstructure which Vernier is attempting to rear upon it. The attempt must fail: the double narrative principle, the base of the original triad, collapses when Pierre Eller becomes the open enemy of his uncle, and Vernier, alienated and exhausted by his efforts to englobe such a vast segment of life, sinks into sickness. The final phrase of the book—"Qui parle?"—rings as the admission of the impossibility of a coherent point of view. In another, intellectual logic, too, the failure is inevitable: when every verifiable fact necessitates several unverifiable ones, when every moment of time captured and recorded implies an unending chronological recession, our best instruments can operate only on a sort of uncertainty principle. To capture and fix the living organism, the significant human event and emotion, is to destroy its vitality; to convey this vitality is to renounce any organization or fixation. Vernier's project is analogous to projecting the round globe onto a flat map: as he explains to his students, one may choose his distortion, but distortion there must be.

The scope and implications of the enterprise are vast, for into it are woven all the readings of the *lycée:* fragments of Shakespeare, Homer, Racine, Rabelais, Dante mingle with the laws of thermodynamics and Vernier's symbolic lecture on the discovery of America to form a rich cultural tapestry which is itself only part of the whole in which Vernier would situate his nephew. The project resembles an *A La Recherche du temps perdu* and a *Ulysses* combined, a year in the Lycée Taine which will only have meaning when one of its actors confronts it ten or twenty years later. As Henri Jouret, the third member of the initial triad and the more objective narrator of the final section of the novel, realizes, the failure is a magnificent one:

> . . . dans l'édification de cette tour d'où l'on devait voir l'Amérique, s'est formé quelque chose qui devait la faire exploser; il n'a pu élever que quelques pans de murs, et s'est produite cette conflagration qui non seulement a suspendu tous les travaux, mais qui a miné le sol sur lequel ils se dressent, et c'est pourquoi tout ce qu'il me reste à faire devant ce vestige d'une conscience et d'une musique future, c'est de l'étayer quelque peu, pour que puisse en souffrir le passant, pour que les choses autour, pour que cet état d'inachèvement, de ruine lui deviennent insupportables, car dans ces poutres tordues, dans cet échafaudage déchiqueté, le soleil change la rouille en or, et le vent. . . .[18]

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Salvage is finally the task of the reader: he must reëxamine Vernier's goal and his method, must reconstruct for himself the phenomena on which the novel has been only a partial and oblique commentary; finally the reader must put novel, failed novel, created reality, and "outside reality" together, to draw the artistic and moral consequences.

This strenuous effort and final lucid consciousness that Butor demands of his reader are identical to those the novelist has known in the exploratory creation of writing. The "le" in the passage is the novel:

> Cette prise de conscience du travail romanesque va, si j'ose dire, le dévoiler en tant que dévoilant, l'amener à produire ses raisons, développer en lui ses éléments qui vont montrer comment il est relié au reste du réel, et en quoi il est éclairant pour ce dernier; le romancier commence à savoir ce qu'il fait, le roman à dire ce qu'il est.[19]

Never has the novel been so thoroughly about itself, yet never has it been so engaged with reality. And the reality is much broader and more human than Robbe-Grillet's world of arrested objects: Butor captures the vitality of children's conversations, so suggesting in the texture of the work the necessity both for Vernier's undertaking and his failure. Yet, since the novel is the laboratory in which we answer our questions about human life, the rôle of the intellect remains primary. The place of the intellect is first of all in the style: Butor's prose moves slowly and analytically in long phrases carefully articulated into paragraphs within sentences. In the maintenance of tension between the allegiance to this style and the allegiance to a world given the freedom to be itself lies Butor's genius. It is he who is giving us the most exciting illustration of what a neo-realism can mean.

Along with Robbe-Grillet, Butor, and Mme Sarraute, Claude Simon is usually near the top of any list of the "new novelists." While he is unquestionably a masterful novelist, and although the "school" we have been attempting to discern is undeniably loose, Simon's efforts would seem to have little to do with the *nouveau roman* and much to do with American impressionism, especially with Faulkner. The degree of his imitation of Faulkner automatically makes Simon's enterprise seem suspect. In his novels, a Faulknerian voice drowns the action, mythologizing and Biblicizing—a voice ponderous, analytical, yet vitally involved. The narrative is put together from fragments, in a logic of emotion rather than of chronology, with all the Faulknerian parentheses, qualifications which

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

seem to annul one another, judgments preceding depiction of the events judged, suspension of time in a series of heroically enlarged stills. Since Simon's purposes are individual and his fictional world idiosyncratic, one need not cry plagiarism, and one may admire the great skill with which he has adapted Faulkner's novelistic discoveries to his own ends. But admiration should not conceal the fact that he is not an innovator and that his techniques provide no reorientation of the novel.

When one moves from the nucleus of Robbe-Grillet, Butor, and Mme Sarraute to the peripheral figures and younger authors who have been attached by critics and journalists to the "movement," connections become ever more tenuous. That Claude Mauriac, for example, understands the impulsion toward a new realism is apparent in his choice, as title of his latest novel, of the phrase with which Paul Valéry reproached the novel its quotidian concerns: *La Marquise sortit à cinq heures.* But the author of *Le Dîner en ville,* next to Mme Sarraute, to whom his writing owes debts, seems lacking in serious intent; he is rather an erudite and clever entertainer. Marguerite Duras, who has covered a gamut of novelistic approaches, was welcomed (by some) to the *nouveau roman* with *Le Square* and *Moderato Cantibile,* novels of almost disembodied dialogue. More recently, *Dix Heures et demie du soir en été* and *L'Après-midi de Monsieur Andesmas* develop her idiosyncratic techniques, which would seem only superficially to resemble those of Robbe-Grillet.

Marc Saporta (who, according to his editor, is pursuing a fusion of "old" and "new" novels) has produced in *La Quête* a rather tiresome imitation of Robbe-Grillet, where we sense—as, it seems to me, we rarely do with his master,—an impoverishment of reality. His recent *Composition No. 1*—a "novel" of unbound sheets which the reader is to shuffle and read in any direction he chooses—is a modish implementation of Mallarmé's dream of *Le Livre.* Philippe Sollers, leader of the young and lively *Tel Quel* group (this quarterly was founded in 1960) has beautifully constructed what seems a rather gratuitous piece of aestheticism in *Le Parc.* The future of any movement seems unsure: it is entirely possible that it will end up producing not new, but novelty novels.

At present the "school" is remarkably silent (Butor's recent publications are in verse), and the annual production of novels in France as elsewhere seems to fall into the more traditional categories. With the paroxysm and the polemic past, the work of the central innovators should emerge more clearly for what it is: not novelty for its

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

own sake, not, despite its difficulty, *littérature de coterie,* but novels of an extreme technical sophistication written out of an intransigent moral commitment to a rediscovery of the relations between literature and the phenomena of existence. That "reality" is a thoroughly elusive and variable concept does not really matter: what matters is realism, the task of which, as Mme Sarraute states, is to

> saisir, en s'efforcant de tricher le moins possible et de ne rien rogner ni aplatir pour venir à bout des contradictions et des complexités, à scruter, avec toute la sincérité dont il est capable, aussi loin que le lui permet l'acuité de son regard, ce qui lui apparaît comme étant la réalité.[20]

No one would contend that the "new novelists" have discovered the only methods to renew this scrutiny; but their reaction is a healthy reaffirmation of the use and the necessity of the novel as a form.

References

1. Michel Butor, "Le roman comme recherche," *Répertoire,* Paris, 1960. p. 9.
2. Alain Robbe-Grillet, "Le réalisme, la psychologie, et l'avenir du roman," *Critique* No. 111-112 (Août-Septembre, 1956).
3. Robbe-Grillet, "Une voie pour le roman futur," *NNRF,* No. 43 (Juillet, 1956), p. 80.
4. *Ibid.,* p. 83.
5. Jean Ricardou, "Description et infraconscience chez Alain Robbe-Grillet," *NRF,* No. 95 (Novembre, 1960), p. 898.
6. Roland Barthes, "Littérature littérale," *Critique,* No. 100.
7. Robbe-Grillet in symposium, *Le Figaro Littéraire,* 29 Mars, 1958.
8. See Butor, "Balzac et la réalité," *Répertoire.*
9. Butor, "Le roman comme recherche," *Répertoire,* p. 8.
10. *Ibid.,* p. 9.
11. *Ibid.,* p. 10.
12. See Marcel Proust, *Pastiches et mélanges.* Proust had in mind the crudity of Balzac's style, the pre-literary quality of his work, which to Proust seemed too close to actuality to be great literature. Butor's style often seems consciously to seek a pre-literary roughness.
13. Butor, "Intervention à Royaumont," *Répertoire,* p. 272.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

14. F. W. Dupee, "An Imaginary Island," *The Reporter,* Vol. 25, No. 2 (July 20, 1961).

15. Michel Leiris, "Le réalisme mythologique de Michel Butor," *Critique,* No. 129 (Fevrier, 1958).

16. Bernard Pingaud, "Je vous il," *Esprit,* No. 7-8, (Juillet-Août, 1958).

17. "Portrait-Interview" by Paul Guth, *Le Figaro Littéraire,* No. 607 (7 Décembre, 1957).

18. Butor, *Degrés,* Paris, 1960. p. 385.

19. Butor, "Intervention à Royaumont," *Répertoire,* p. 274.

20. Nathalie Sarraute, *L'Ere du soupçon,* Paris, 1956. p. 141.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ANDREW LYTLE

Impressionism, The Ego, and The First Person

THE WRITERS who will appear in these pages may all in some way be called impressionists, but it will be the burden of this piece to show how little is the help, in reading, of the large definitions. Realism, naturalism, impressionism, existentialism—all these derive from philosophy. They are pseudo-philosophical terms, and they are of some help. There are times when discourse needs comparisons; needs formulae. Such terms discriminate the larger areas of learning; but they remain signposts, showing the way only towards the discovery of the individual talent, which is there to be read for itself, for its unique contribution, not as evidence of a school. Yet the terms are honorable, of long standing, and for the critic, when he is not deliberately trying to be scientific, useful. But they must be remade in sympathy and understanding to serve the arts.

And this latest of the arts in language, fiction, has suffered most from inadequate critical tools. Verse has inherited numerous formal aids; fiction—itself a bad enough word for what it represents—depends for its formal control upon the point of view. The view or post of observation, to use James's definition, orders the structure which in an impressionist novel leaves nothing inert. This structure is composed of two actions: the enveloping action, which contains a universal truth or some one of the complications which forever recur upon the human scene; and secondly, the action itself which is one instance of such a truth or complication. These actions fall into two parts, the scene and the pictorial or panoramic summary. The play, of course, is composed of scenes. Fiction's peculiar distinction lies in the summary. It is of the very essence of fiction, and when the writer relies too largely upon scenes and dialogue, he diminishes his art and possibly should write for the theater.

On the stage, dialogue is supported by the living presence of the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

actor, his gesture, magnetism, intonation of voice. Under a good director all of the actors make the structure of the play "work." Since all of this living presence is lacking in a story or novel, the pictorial summary must take its place: it does more than this, and also less. Nothing can substitute for the living presence of the actor. However, there are areas of the mind and imagination which the spoken word neither reaches nor reveals. The extreme artificiality of the soliloquy shows what an advantage fiction has in the exploration of any part of consciousness, even to the extent of suggesting the supernatural.

It was Henry James's mastery of the panorama, perhaps, which made his plays theatrical failures. In impressionism the scene is usually limited by the restrictions of a mind seeing as well as interpreting the action, whether this mind uses the first person or the "central intelligence." There are two kinds of scenes, the objective scene which stands by itself and the scene depending upon this mind (such as the marquis' ball viewed by Emma Bovary). Although fiction can use both kinds of scenes, this last is particularly the impressionist scene. Nobody does a better scene than James; it depends upon, and fulfills, with the immediacy of sensible action, the panoramic summary which has gone before it. James, who is recognized as the first master of this method, defined it as a direct impression of life; and nothing can be more direct than a mind, involved in a crisis, receiving impressions of others as this crisis is taking place. James learned from Turgenev not to use a contrived plot, but to control the action as it grows out of the complication. It follows that whatever sets the action in motion does so by entering and freeing the author's imagination (James took from an anecdote only what would release his own mind and story); but chiefly impressionism seems to be dependent upon the point of view or post, substituting a central intelligence or a first person for the old reportorial omniscience. And this required an intrusion into areas of the mind only crudely used before, giving the critic the inadequate terms "stream of consciousness" and "interior monologue." I hope I may be excused for stating the obvious, but no critical nomenclature exists for fiction upon which all may agree.

There may be millions of views or posts of observation, but the central intelligence can only take them one at a time; and each time there is a two-fold operation. The level of experience will be restricted by the view, but to it the author adds his own vision. Sight into the world, insight into the author's psyche, fused by the shock of recognition at the post, gives to the vision its proper form. An

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

element of the form is generally some degree of the stream of consciousness, in which it is possible to explore the mind in all its mystery and properties as the grounds for action. One might ask why the omniscient view cannot do the same. It can, but the delusive freedom of all knowledge is generally too seductive for most writers. It tempts them to intrude their opinions; too often they report where they should render. In the impressionist novel, or rather in the novel whose view is restricted, ideally no word is used which does not forward the action. This is never so with discursive omniscience.

But a real danger presents itself upon entering a mind so freely. The possibilities for variety of experience are enormous; and so only the strictest view can save the fiction from redundancies, irrelevancies, obscenities more deadly than the reportorial prolixities of omniscience. The best of the impressionists understand the technical necessity for restraint in the plunge within and below consciousness. The clearest image for this act is very old: the labyrinth. The explorer may wind and cross and lose himself, so long as he holds the thread and so long as its terminal is outside the labyrinth. However, many of these writers seem not to understand the dangers of the first person. Since this view is a prejudiced one and since it seems to carry the most authority, it requires of the author all his ingenuity. Nor can they resist the sound of the author's voice. The voice is the swiftest way to set the tone, but too often the writer falls in love with it so that the action drowns.

I suppose Henry Miller's voice is the most torrential in present-day letters. There is no *ism* which will quite define him. I would hesitate to call him an impressionist; and yet multifarious impressions of the world pass through his ego and sometimes are given form by it. He is not really an artist, and yet at times he produces works of art. He is the hero of everything he writes and is as innocent as a child speaking of himself in the third person. He is not actually a fiction writer; he is a prophet without a religion. He is a tremendous sensibility which mixes up all that is current in the world, and more often than not makes nonsense of it. For example, "the time will come when they [the poets] will communicate silently, not as poets, but as seers." You can go through almost any page of his and find brilliant assumptions, and in the next sentence contradicting sentiments. Too often you feel that all of this goes through him, like a flux, without any reflection, as if he were in a trance. And yet when he really brings it off, as in *Berthe* and in

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Reunion in Brooklyn, he manages to make of himself a fictive actor. He "immolates" himself as a person and becomes the protagonist of the story. In *Berthe,* the fictional Henry's sympathy, his bleeding heart, reveals the isolation and despair of the whore before she has become reconciled to her plight. This is so managed by the final little scene that it is not sentimental but the best kind of irony. For all his kindness and sympathy merely isolates her the more, revealing to her the hopelessness of her situation and therefore increasing her anguish.

As good as they are, these shorter pieces do not make him a fictional writer; yet all of his work comprises a kind of fictitious autobiography of modern man looking for truth and salvation. His protagonist and his view is that of a Super-ego. This Super-ego is historic man making his last stand. For this reason Miller has seemed to me to be a prophet without a religion, for try as you may you cannot make of the secular world a religious one. In that second fall of man, the fall into history (Machiavelli's *The Prince* being the new testament for this), the individual found himself in a world of endless discretion. This is the obverse to the Christian vision, when man decried his uniqueness to become more nearly what was common to all believers. As belief in divine authority waned, the ego and its impression, the personality, alone was able to resist anonymity, confront the terror of time imitating eternity. Now the citizen confronts the very abyss itself. There is no longer the historic man to shield him.

From the beginning the impressionist has sensed the gross inadequacy of the secular world as the subject for fictive truth. The technical usage of the consciousness and the strict view is evidence of this. The invisible mind as stage forces the impression beyond external reality, downwards or within the consciousness, that area of the writer's being which is mysterious, where the opposites of good and evil will be encountered. This is not a substitute for religion, but it is a part of the religious feeling. How well the techne performs depends precariously upon the writer himself, since his private vision is no longer supported by either universal faith or the historic man.

For this reason, perhaps, there is such diversity of performance, differing levels of authority among the impressionists. The decline in the method seems to be found among those writers who never get out of the stream of consciousness (Claude Simon), or who use the first person for material it cannot handle. The succession of impres-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sions with brief statements reporting what a person is like, the long almost abstract comparisons of human beings to natural objects, each impression taking a short chapter, with no transition—such too often is the structure of these novels. You will find exactly this in the opening chapters of anais nin's *Cities of the Interior*. The first person is so isolated within its uncontrolled reflections and sensations that it cannot withdraw critically in any sense. The married heroine has a husband, children, an incomparable housekeeper, a thriving establishment. But this is not enough for her: her romantic ego must find strange and perverse understanding and experience. This is grounds for a true action. However, to give it meaning the author should establish the fullest relationship to husband and children, housekeeper and establishment. Instead the author makes the briefest of references to the life she will give up and the house she will set adrift. We are, therefore, not convinced affectively that she ever had a husband, children, or an establishment to sacrifice. We can only accept her in the monstrosity of her ego.

Here we have the ego turned loose, without the thread of direction, in the unconscious, the near-conscious, and the consciousness itself. This self-absorption in the accidental part of being, the great I, becomes the more monstrous the greater the sensibility it occupies. Its very monstrosity comes from its isolation from all other parts of self, and, in the artist, from the post of objectivity, of critical awareness. Like the Minotaur, that image of man's predicament, it wanders impotently among the corridors of the most intricate work of art, as in a wilderness. This suggests why the acts most real in Miller and Durrell are the sexual ones. Once sex defined male and female. Now it is reduced to the act itself, the act as the only reality left in common understanding. In a world where neither the historic man nor the whole man governs (therefore where his institutions are either empty hulls or the agencies of the state's arbitrary acts), this cultural and political predicament, as always, is anticipated by the artist. Once you accept sex, not as the source of life and human relationship, but as the meaning itself, you must accept any and all of its varieties; and you must accept them without restraint of judgment. Since it seems the last vitality, to withdraw and judge is to withdraw from life. In *The Black Book* Durrell's protagonist sums it up: the verb which means *to copulate,* he says, "has become synonymous with the verb *to be.* It is as if this act were the one assurance of existence remaining to us still." The only thing about this truth is: what are you going to do in between times? We have

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

lost so much ground since our mythological world parents lasted out a three-hundred year embrace.

Durrell's book seems to indicate that death-in-life fills the time not only between but in the act itself. This death has for components a confusion between public and private matters: the four-letter words, acts which once would have seemed pornographic, scatology, the secret dark things exposed to light. The author's intention is to present us with the terrors of this situation. However, his characters are unequal to the occasion, and this is generally true of this kind of impressionism. Instead of being the death of England, as he asserts, they actually represent what has always been about: the vulgarity of easy vice, easy because it has no longer behind it the threat of evil and because vulgarity is the clearest sign of life these people have.

Death in *The Black Book* is, therefore, sentimental. The ego of the first person protagonist is drawn into but does not control the action. There are comparable scenes between this fiction and *Nightwood* by Djuna Barnes which demonstrate the differences between a work of art and an imaginative book by a young man not yet in control of his medium or of his sense of reality. In *The Black Book* Tarquin, an older man attracted to a gigolo, enters his room:

> He takes a few turns around the room, in such precise don's paces that he almost trips in the snowy bits. On the washstand a comb, thick with dirt and grease from Hylas' sable locks; on the pisspot holder a thriller, face down; the book he had lent the boy on the first day of his campaign for higher thinking and purer love is deep in dust. The bed lamp is on. Hylas is afraid to sleep in the dark. On the shelf is a broken enema syringe and carton of crab ointment. Tarquin explores these things with disgust.

The details are precise: they describe a boy whose sin is sloth certainly, but the meaning has been reduced to Tarquin's disgust. It doesn't go beyond the immediate relationship between the two characters because the first person uses only his eyes to report, not his mind which might render the total dramatic effect.

In *Nightwood* Nora at a crisis in her life mounts six flights to ask Doctor O'Connor "everything you know about the night." She enters his room to learn from the damned the nature of the dark, evil's atmosphere. What follows is not merely a self-contained impression but the introduction to an action which advances the total action of the book. As the door to the doctor's room opens, she "hesitates" before the incredible disorder that meets her eye. This

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

disorder is the very order of evil. She has entered that domain, Night, where all the dark opposites hold sway. The night, the grave, the prison, the inchoate and criminal needs, the secret impulse for innocence to be ravished—all this is here in the opening scene, and it is all here in the revealing images. The room is so small "it was just possible to walk sideways up to the bed; it was as if being condemned to the grave, the doctor had decided to occupy it with the utmost abandon." There are bars on the one small window, which suggest both the prison and the grave, that ultimate confinement after judgment. The dust and filth is here as in the other scene, but the images are more dramatically exact. The books piled to the ceiling are ruined both by dust and water: the neglect relates to and introduces the rusty forceps, the broken scalpel, odd instruments of a doctor's profession. These are juxtaposed to the twenty-odd bottles of pomades, creams, rouges, etcetera. In this juxtaposition the images clash, and in so doing show the evidence of the doctor's damnation. It is the betrayal of the profession, the trade, which is the masculine betrayal, since a man's work describes and judges him. The pomades follow and show another betrayal. In the scene in *The Black Book*, at the most we get in the broken syringe neglect or abuse of the body, and the excremental parody of the act of love. The swill pail in *Nightwood* is called by its name. In *The Black Book* the shock is the surface shock of the four-letter word. The jar "swimming with abominations" in *Nightwood* is a controlling image and hence technically apt.

The doctor is discovered in bed, in a night gown, with long false curls, rouged and lashes painted, his appearance that of narcissistic innocence, not transformed in the instant of self-love but continuing into middle age. This is the innocence never truly lost, and so a perversion of both innocence and knowledge, the suggestion of both and the actuality of neither. It flashed through Nora's head, as she looked: "God, children know something they can't tell; they like Red Riding Hood and the wolf in bed!"

The true terror of his situation is that he evacuates custom only at night; the agony is that he can live only at night; that the opposites of day and night, comprising the conflict which is life, do not serve in the doctor's case. To him the day is a prison; he tries to drink it away; the night is a prison as well; it confines him in the distortion of his love, since it reduces love to the act of darkness. This is a denial of light and therefore a kind of hell. So it is that the coffin-like room, the little scene there, "is as mauled as the last agony."

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

This becomes the reality of his being; it obliterates time in its suspension; it persists like but is not eternity. His final drunken scene protests his predicament, in the horror of self-knowledge which only comes from knowledge of the world as it afflicts and, in afflicting, shows the self. "Now," he said, "the end—mark my words—now *nothing, but wrath and weeping*!" Wrath and weeping suggest the four last things and the inexplicable mystery of faith. In *The Black Book*, God is reduced to man and even less than the full man.

Durrell's relativism, consciously got from Einstein and Freud, becomes the structure for *The Alexandria Quartet*. There is a good deal of tiresome lecturing on relativity, not only tiresome but stale, since it is repeating at second hand the discoveries of first-rate minds. The legitimate method is to let the actors perform in such a way as to show the theory embodied: to make it flesh, as fiction must. And to a certain extent this is done, but Darley as the first person point of view never resolves the meaning of all the action in the four books. He is the first person observer (who sometimes acts), whose mind receives images and sensations without reflection. When he becomes actor, he does reflect and report, but altogether within the immediate situation he finds himself involved in. Justine remains, at the end, disconnected shapes and images. So does Nessim. The relativity begets one illusion after another, but finally the reader surely can ask, what is the reality of this large and complex action?

Darley and Clea at the end of the fourth book find some solution, if not salvation; she as a painter and he as a writer, they hope. This is no more than some kind of ending to their personal involvement, not an intelligence resolving the complex matters of the action in all four books. The author no doubt meant it all to be relative. Whatever he meant, he asks the reader to do his final work for him, the pulling together of the separate parts into the one meaning. The author in the end should "know," as any creator knows, the entire truth about his creations. He as creator cannot be a relativist, even if he deals in relativity.

A writer who started out well, William Styron, has a recent book, *Set This House On Fire*, which could serve as an example for the failure of the first person view. It is a long, discursive book, and in the two hundred thousand words of impressions, much does not bear directly upon the action. The book's mechanical and formal structure is in two parts. The first person, Peter Leveret, a lawyer and youthful companion of the antagonist, Mason Flagg, should be

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the principal actor, since it presumably is his story; but actively it is only his story in the first part, and even here he is more of a commentator than actor. Cass Kinsolving, the painter who can't or won't paint, takes over in the second part, that is he becomes the protagonist who acts and is changed by his acts. The only way the reader can accept the lawyer, Peter Leveret, as the protagonist is by restricting the author's meaning to the legal curiosity of solving a murder mystery.

But the author's intention is obviously more than this. The action seems to arise from the constant struggle the artist suffers, the conflict between his work and "life." Cass Kinsolving, who enters the action addicted to drink, falls into bondage to Flagg, whose person and possessions threaten the integrity of the painter as artist and man. To free himself and recover his self-respect he murders Flagg, who has raped a girl Kinsolving is sentimentally attached to and whom he thinks, mistakenly, Flagg has also murdered. This act of violence miraculously returns him to his manhood and profession, since Flagg had used his power to reduce the real artist to his own spurious level. So the murder becomes symbolic of self and artistic recovery in a literal sense: for drink, Kinsolving has painted a pornographic picture of the act of love, which he regrets and which he tears up as a sign of his release. Any violation of viewpoint or a drifting of it causes confusion in the reader's knowledge and sympathy. As well it is often a sign of the author backing away from a seemingly insoluble problem. Such problems, if confronted, are the way in to the true subject. Anybody with a narrative gift can tell some kind of a story: the successful artist tells the one story the circumstances and actors demand.

There are several technical failures which come from the shift of view when, in the second part, Leveret is not close enough to the action, and Kinsolving has to take over. To begin with, it is never clear why Kinsolving is addicted to drink. Nor can we believe his wife in the role she has to play. She appears like one of those characters a playwright leaves on the stage, mesmerized, until needed for a too-plotted appearance. At the height of the crisis, in a crowded house, she remains curiously hidden. As if the author felt her lack, he does earlier let her come to Flagg's apartment and protest, but it is a protest we do not believe because we do not believe in her as a human being. And we must, because by not answering a letter, she loses the money which puts her husband into Flagg's hands. Such irresponsibility is known to exist, but the miraculous

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

recovery from it which follows her husband's miraculous recovery of himself is hard to believe. Certainly murder takes on virtues we never dreamed of. But the great flaw in the book is Mason Flagg. He is another hero whose slogan is "sex, the last frontier." It is never clear what power he has over men and women, so easily triumphant no wonder he is a spoiled vicious nature, a leader of the movie set, the choral representative of spurious art. He is in both parts of the novel, but is treated from the outside and superficially. Probably Peter Leveret should have been dropped and the view put with Flagg, the antagonist. At any rate it is the author's failure to bring him alive in the full necessity of an evil, rather than vicious, force at work which is the failure of the book.

As this investigation continues, it is becoming clearer that "the impressionism of the ego" makes of the first person not an aesthetic procedure but a subjective fusion of subject and method, a kind of autobiography of the author's stream of consciousness, with little critical examination or restraint on his part. It is a cultural phenomenon and an artistic regression. An art is first of all selective, and that means frequent withdrawal for critical appraisal and revision from the stream of creating which holds tangential and diverting material that has to be thrown out. The impressionist of the ego seems to want to keep everything, whether it advances the action or not, keeping it worshipfully because it is a part of him. It follows that in this kind of fiction the author may dispense with decorum, convention, all the formal restraints and institutions by means of which society governs and recognizes itself. Even when the institutions and manners are recognized, they are treated frivolously or ridiculed, as limitations upon self-expression, the only truth. These writers make a grievous error, for there is in art no action without its proper form, nor as norm no uninhibited man in society. These writers rarely go to such extremes, but they go far enough to fall short of committing themselves absolutely to their material, and in treating it never risk failure in the adventure of the one comprehensive meaning for the action.

The first person can be skillfully used, when it conforms to a traditional attitude towards nature and society. A good example of this is a book by Albert Guerard which came out in 1950: *Night Journey*. Whereas Styron divides his novel mechanically into two parts, neither of which receives the control of a view (and this means the reader does not know quite with whom his sympathy should lie, or in which part the meaning more nearly may be discovered),

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the action of *Night Journey* takes place between two first persons, each one carrying on an interior monologue, the hero and his choral interpreter, who in alternating their voices make a dramatic dialogue which clearly advances the action toward its resolution. The resolution unites as it should the action and the enveloping action, giving the hero, Paul Haldan, a universal meaning as well as the meaning of his particular fate. As much as the other writers so far considered, Guerard confronts a shattered and changing society. But behind *Night Journey* is a civilized intelligence which renders the terror of Europe when the controls for action are no longer interrelated, and abstract ideas are the last expression of organized government. Ideas become propaganda, propaganda deliberate lies, out of which rises the hopeless cynicism which describes the condition of the state. This is the enveloping action: nothing is as it seems; the thread of belief has snapped; man wanders without direction over a terrain where war never stops, with the fog of war now the fog of all human action. When peace is war and war is peace, every institution and convention is distorted. The controlling image for the action is a civilian who is more military than the soldiers. He dresses as a civilian but carries himself like a Prussian. He comes into an army with orders from the highest command and so moves about out of any control, either from the military or civil authority. This is the ultimate confusion. To this has the state been reduced.

Paul Haldan, thrust into this situation with youthful hope of purpose, is attached to this concrete symbol of disorder and betrayal; he represents the night journey mankind must now take. Since Haldan remembers Europe in its civilized era, both the action and the enveloping action are united in his dilemma and in his relationship to the controlling image. Not sex but the nullity of all desire threatens Europe. The first person operates both on the literal and symbolic level, and it delivers its meaning, which is not an autobiography of a consciousness but a consciously controlled rendition of the subject's complication, established upon an individual's conflict and illuminated by a choral effect, also concentrated upon an individual. If at times the monotony which describes the edge of the abyss affects the reader as well as the actors, it is the trap of the first person, even traditionally used.

If *Night Journey* suggests the true desolation which must follow the breaking of all forms and rules, annihilating the human capacity to be, making the egos in life as shadowy as the ghosts in the classical

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

underworld, then *Under the Volcano* by Malcolm Lowry renders hell in the mind of one man, the Consul, as a condition of such exquisite agony that society impinges upon the struggling psyche of the hero with no more certainty than images seen through the poisoned vapors of the volcano. It does not matter whether this society is shattered or alien, the Consul is in exile and alone. His aloneness is the result of and the punishment for a mortal crime; it is Satan's condition when he was cast forth from the mind of God, that is from love, to the isolation of his own thoughts, which is hell. What is lacking in Miller and Durrell and Styron is a sense of evil. None of their characters suffer the consequences of their acts. Cass Kinsolving commits murder; yet, instead of being made to suffer either in his conscience or by the state, murder regenerates him. This is surely heresy. He remains perpetually drunk throughout the action; yet he acts more or less in control of himself. The only indication of drunkenness is in his sentimental relationship to the peasant girl and her father. We do not believe the depraved acts Flagg makes him perform before his guests, because he never seems drunk enough either before or after. This is again evidence of the failure of the chosen view. We are never close enough to the hero's inward plight.

I take Kinsolving for comparison, because both he and the Consul commit murder and remain drunk throughout the action. Kinsolving commits murder towards the end of the action; the Consul before it begins. In other words the Consul's story depends upon what effect the murder has had upon him. We watch the process by which sin destroys a soul and how it suffers in hell. We don't know why the Consul put three German officers in the ship furnace; we are not quite sure he did it, but certainly he felt responsible, for there is no other explanation for the loss of love and his decline and self-damnation. His marriage failed, we must assume, because of his conscience and his pride; not from his wife's adultery which he drove her to, because it is she who loves, who comes back to him; and it is he who cannot repent and ask forgiveness, either of God or of man, that brings them both to their deaths. This is the action of the novel, the vestige of love which the Consul has for his wife struggles for but does not achieve atonement. Pride triumphs. "The will of man," he says, "is unconquerable. Even God cannot conquer it." They both literally and symbolically die for their sins, wandering in the literal and metaphorical dark of the jungle path: he for murder, she for adultery. The horse is the occasion for his

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

death; its flight actually kills her, the agency which his hand literally sent. The horse stands for the masculine intuition and instincts which may save but, out of control, destroy. It was this instinctive sense of their need for each other which brought Yvonne back to him; but it was too late. He was too far gone in drink and remorse and illusion and hatred. Salvation in the spasmodic rise of his need for love offered itself until he took to mescal, that drink which destroys the reason and with it reality.

As is often the case, that which saves can destroy. Yvonne, returning to reoffer her love, brings death instead. Her husband, the Consul, struggles to reunite with her; but as he says, he loves hell now, simply because in the state of his conscience, he is no longer free to love elsewhere. His sins have so isolated him that his communion can only be with his damnation. He has committed every mortal sin, and each is the doorway to hell, although he enters it first by the gluttony of drink, which he says is also food. Never crying mea culpa for his initial affront to God (that is, by taking life which only God may do), he substitutes for the actual world a state of continual and extreme intoxication, whose delirium is filled by the voices of his "familiars." This is his hell. His conscience intrudes but in an inverted way, so that all his acts show the double betrayal of self and love. In moments of clarity he "flees for his life" not to a church but to a pulcheria. Everywhere he looks he finds another aspect of hell.

Nobody has shown so well the hell which is the flight from self, even to the quality of the style which is heavy and overweighted, as if to draw the reader there too. All the controlling images contain the pains and degradation of hell. The volcanoes give the physical sense of it. And they stand, also, for a mythical separation in marriage, as does Maximilian's broken palace, turned into an outdoor privy, among the ruins of which insects and mongrel dogs wander. Betrayal, the failure of marriage, madness find in the ruins the proper images. The Consul prays to the Virgin who describes his condition: "She is the Virgin for those who have nobody with." He asks to truly suffer; he asks for the return of his purity, the knowledge of the Mysteries that he has betrayed and lost. He asks that he may be truly lonely so that he may *honestly* pray. Then he asks "let us (he and Yvonne) be happy again . . . if it's only out of this terrible world. 'Destroy the world,' he said in his heart." The only thing that will destroy the world is love and that means the giving of self, which the Consul is no longer able to do. "No se puede

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

vivir sin amar" is repeated, and again at the very end. All of the images match or suggest his betrayal and damnation. He alternately sips strychnine and whiskey, a way to sober up; but it fails because he takes it in excess, as he doesn't want to sober up. They are both aphrodisiacs which cancel each other out and contain, in excess, death. This symbolizes his plight and the end, as does the picture show where "Dark shapes of pariah dogs prowled in and out of the stalls. The lights were not entirely dead: they glimmered, a dim reddish orange, flickering" (like hell). The picture is a horror story with Peter Lorre, presenting a murderer who has an artist's hands. So has the Consul, who never finishes his book; his crime thwarts his true profession and hence his manhood. The action takes place on the day of the feast of the dead, whose meaning as ceremony and private grief divulges, by antithesis, the double nature of the Consul's crime: the betrayal of the state and of his marriage.

He and his wife and his brother Hugh (who has loved Yvonne) hold a last supper in a pulcheria, although unwittingly but pertinently, in which love is travestied and addressed obscenely, and subverted by salacious and vulgar punning. The main dish is "the spectral chicken of the house." This is the beginning of the end, and the end comes with the literal and figurative diverging of the paths, in his last flight. If Yvonne and Hugh had taken the right instead of the left fork, they would have overtaken the Consul; they might have rescued him, but it is more likely that they would have postponed to another occasion his death and the final damnation, for the action of this story is the perpetual re-losing of the earthly paradise. I suppose the action hangs upon betrayal, the enveloping action, death which came into the world at the original fall. Death's images match the images of life which struggle to oppose it, but the dead ones predominate, as drink in the Consul's mind turns into the fumes of hell and the loss of hope. "How indeed could he hope to find himself, to begin again when, somewhere, in one of those lost or broken bottles, in one of those glasses, lay, forever, the solitary clue to his identity?" The nature of his original crime is lost in the severity of the punishment for it.

At Parián his spiritual and moral crimes create their physical counterparts in the actual world. Here he recovers Yvonne's lost love letters (lost when drunk, drunkenness, however, being the mere occasion). These letters in all humility and grace and longing offer the solace of love and life and salvation to them both. His first thought is that she has been reading some good stylist. The last chap-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ter opens with his order for mescal. This gives the image and direction of the final act. He allows himself to be manhandled, his person to be rifled (her letters are taken from him). His money is stolen; he is mocked; he is covered with the slime of pimps, criminal police, subversives, since it is they who should keep order. His will which he boasted even God could not conquer is now at the mercy of criminals and criminal suggestion. He is led off by and commits the act of lust with a whore, while the pimp watches. He looks up, and a picture of Canada on a calendar confronts him. It was here that Yvonne had planned their new life, in a kind of physical paradise. To see it on a calendar marking time makes the final twist of irony. He knows now all is lost, that he can never return to his wife, because the act he has committed is the final affront to and denial of love, without which one cannot live. After this he quickly comes to his physical death, but not until the hell where all the deadly sins take shape among the various criminals, hags, subhuman individuals who surround and taunt him, or try to warn of what will follow. He is now beyond shame, dignity, feeling, even beyond all that is done to him here. He is already dead when the representative of law and order, now a murderer and outlaw, shoots him down with malice. His death repeats in parody his own act with the German prisoners, the public and private violation which cast him out of the world into the symbolic volcano, a ravine into which a dead dog is thrown after him. At the end, from the third person of a roving narrator, the author steps forward and prints on the page opposite the end

Le Gusta este Jardin
Que es suyo?
Evite que sus hijos lo Destruyan!

The excellencies and native talents of these writers must be taken for granted—these writers whose performance has been impaired by the Ego. This Ego represents a cultural disorder which should be used by, instead of use, the first person point of view. The material is incompletely controlled, therefore, and the decline of impressionism is witnessed. The invisible form which resides within the mind does not realize itself substantially at the post; nor, in Lubbock's words, do the form and content mutually use each other up. The third person, James's central intelligence, promises to the reader the author's self-containment, his artificial presence instead of his personal being. Specifically in the light of my argu-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ment here, it means that when the author has to intrude, he should do so invisibly and exit the same way, leaving no evidence of himself except in the changes he has wrought, and in his irony.

There is one other thing to add. The stream of consciousness when used by this imperfect Ego, masquerading as a point of view, makes the action more imperfect by the intensity this use of consciousness gives to the action. There must be some hone, some point of objective reference, some measure for this interior flow; usually this is the secular world. But it need not be just this. Without objectivity the consciousness reveals itself as too private. *To a Lighthouse* is an example. Claude Simon, who has been influenced by Faulkner, keeps his sentences vital and clear for pages, with an astute handling of punctuation; however, the affective intensities of his heroes and heroines make them incomplete. This is because of a disproportion of feeling and reflection to what is actually happening. Again it is the first person, but this time the first person lost in the stream of consciousness. Faulkner used this view, but only as one tool among many which the fictive inheritance offered. Of course we must never forget that execution shares in the imperfections of our mortality; but the post must achieve a disentanglement, so sight and insight can be distinguished and measured and fused.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BREWSTER GHISELIN

Automatism, Intention, and Autonomy in the Novelist's Production

ALL ARTISTS have intentions, in the sense that they work toward an end, if only of the most general kind, to produce or discover in materials some structure having interest, meaning, or force. An artist who is only manipulating materials at random, forefiguring nothing, will still observe the structural developments he is causing to occur in his material, in expectation of some valuable disclosure which he intends to seize upon as it presents itself. If he claims to be acting without intention, he must mean that he refrains from consciously shaping his work. And if he gives reasons for refraining, he will probably resort to the popular explanation that the unconscious processes of the mind, given free rein, can produce structures more interesting, forceful, perhaps even more meaningful, than the conscious processes can. In making some such claim, he will of course be aligning his thought with a large and authoritative body of opinion, to which scientists as well as artists have contributed.

Perhaps no one would question the idea that "the unconscious" plays a necessary part in all creative production. Many of the best novelists have shown their confidence in the prevalent view by attributing to the "unconscious" mind or to the "subconscious" a function of autonomous production indispensable at one stage or another in the shaping of works of fiction. E. M. Forster has explained that while the writer is in a dreamlike state of mind, "He lets down as it were a bucket into his subconscious, and draws up something which is normally beyond his reach. He mixes this thing with his normal

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

experiences, and out of the mixture he makes a work of art."[1] Forster's bucket goes down resoundingly into Henry James's "deep well of unconscious cerebration."[2] James's celebrated metaphor refers to the quiescent stage in the production of fiction, during which imaginative construction continues—as we suppose—even while we do not observe it. He conceived of unconscious construction as occurring at other stages also. The idea of development by a process of "growth" is recurrent in his Prefaces, and he records many rather mysterious gifts of essential configurations, presented to attention as if they had been prefabricated independently of will and awareness. So, for example, the image of one central character, Christopher Newman, "rose before" him spontaneously.

Most novelists who have insisted upon a large unconscious component in their production have also relied on much conscious labor. James himself is typical of them. Other highly dependable observers, such as Robert Penn Warren and Andrew Lytle, have likewise reported a considerable amount of spontaneous, apparently automatic production assisted and augmented by conscious work. Ordinarily, though the novelist may protest, as Forster did, that he depends heavily on what is spontaneously given, he will make himself deliberately responsible for the ultimate shape of his fiction. He may work if need be in the way Ben Jonson reported of "the incomparable Virgil," who "brought forth his verses like a bear, and after formed them with licking."[3]

The conscious work of production, observable as overt activity, has been well explained in terms of the problems of selecting and articulating materials for known ends: it is governed by insight and intentions, and conditioned by skill and ingenuity and by the availability of materials. Though explorable only by inference, the phenomenon of the writer's spontaneous, undeliberate production ought to be understandable in terms of psychological theories, but difficulties arise both from defects in the theory of unconscious behavior and from the way it is usually interpreted.

In most accounts of production, as in those of Forster and James, the theory of the "unconscious" is represented in a curiously rudimentary form: the notion of an autonomous agency elaborating products in darkness and proffering them to consciousness. Under pretext of clarification, this idea merely points to an obscurity. It has the one virtue of seeming to be up to date, a good substitute for such outworn ideas as inspiration. Most people prefer to speak of subconscious activity and unconscious production, or to describe in

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

similar terms the shaping of the materials of art by forces independent of consciousness. It is instructive to see how nicely this explicative generalization expresses the essential of old-fashioned inspiration. The modern conception, in its most general form, is virtually that of two or three thousand years ago.

Like many other artists, Katherine Mansfield has used the old terms with the newer in a way suggesting their equivalence:

> With an artist—one has to allow—Oh tremendously—for the sub-conscious element in his work. He writes he knows not what—he's possessed. I don't mean, of course, always, but when he's *inspired*—as a sort of divine flower to all his terrific hard gardening there comes this sub-conscious . . . wisdom.[4]

It should be conceded that the newer conception—here represented in the idea of a "sub-conscious element" and a "sub-conscious wisdom"—stresses more than does "inspiration" the subjective and organic character of creative action. Though her reference to the favorable effects of labor—"terrific hard gardening"—adds an idea of nurture, of stimulation and enhancement of spontaneous developments through control of circumstances and behavior, it reveals nothing of the central matter, the formative process itself. Mansfield's remarks have their parallel in one of Richard P. Blackmur's: "Often a single fact reported at the dinner-table was enough for James to seize on and plant in the warm bed of his imagination." [5] Both statements represent an essential part of the creative process as a mysterious, spontaneous growth.

In referring to "unconscious cerebration," wells, buckets, and gardens, we may feel that we draw upon scientific insight to explain the spontaneous, apparently undirected shaping of the configurations of art. But what we have relied on is no settled and unitary body of theory confirmed by the test of successful application. It is largely surmise, disciplined by reference to facts, but highly inconclusive. We still lack real understanding of the functioning of the unconscious. Figures of speech and symbolic images express our sense of an unobservable shaping: the notion of a darkness teeming with "contents"—a womb of flesh or earth or water, a reservoir of wonders. We have new names for the old mysterious rage, the abandonment of reason and control to miraculous agencies, the visitation of the Muses. But the process of spontaneous, unintended or involuntary production remains obscure.

The prestige of the idea of the unconscious, and the fascination of colorful imagery and striking hypotheses, have long diverted us.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Turning inquiry upon what is present in the artist's consciousness, including some phenomena generally believed to have little relation to conscious or unconscious production, we shall be brought to consider the most neglected aspect of the creative process: the actual formation of new configurations within the field of attention.

The matter deserving investigation is that formative process in its entirety, the whole of the *configurative action,* as it may be called —not merely what structurings of the material of the medium constitute the figures of the work of art in the field of attention, where they take shape and remain or change and disappear and are supplanted or not, but all the subjective activity concomitant with those structural developments, all the flow of feeling, imagery, and thought which attends them. Some part of this flow, specifically the worker's ordinary, more or less habitual awareness incidental to self-maintenance in the actual world, may appear to have nothing directly to do with those structural developments. The rest of it, manifestly pertinent, is of two kinds; it comprises the producer's awareness of working, and his awareness of the meaning and force of the materials and configurations he organizes. His sense of release and enlargement in solving a problem or discovering a metaphor may serve as an example of the former. Altogether distinct from that kind of awareness is the sensory, affective, and intellectual experience evoked in him by the materials he assembles and the structures into which he forms them. The very goal of the artist's activity is production of some specific and valuable experience of this latter kind, through providing in the substance of his medium the body of configurations which will evoke it in responsive minds.

A danger in theorizing is preconceiving the nature of consciousness in a narrow way. What we have to consider is the artist's whole consciousness, much of which is nonconceptual. His activity in production often appears to him to be directed by impulse toward satisfaction of his need for subjective experiences attainable only by shaping material into configurations that evoke them—that is, by giving it form. Form has its kinetic force, as well as those affective, perceptual, and intellectual effects which complicate in import. In one of its aspects it is psychic energy, realized not in a general agitation of the organism, but in highly specific activity: a particular play of energies inseparable from particular configural events in the field of consciousness. In effecting developments somatic and psychical—such, for example, as that passage "from tension to relaxation" which the composer Hindemith has identified as the charac-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

teristic effect of cadences, "actual *formulae of conclusion*," [6] as he has called them—the structures of a work of art determine the very current of subjective experience in immediate and intimate transformations to which the whole organism submits. Form thus fully apprehended and lived may be said to be *being* as well as *meaning*. In the artist's consciousness, this is its constant aspect.

The novelist's search for his own significant material and his labor in organizing it are his struggle to realize a specific experience of meaning and being, unsupplied by existing structure. For if the structure existed and were known to him his impulse toward realization would be satisfied by recourse to it. The novelist who is not merely reproducing old forms must advance in some ignorance, therefore, toward ends which can be known to him only through following his compulsion to provide in the structure of his fiction an order discoverable in no other way. Inevitably he must do some of his work while unaware of the exact ends he is striving for. As he begins to see where he is moving, he can begin working deliberately toward what at first he was only obscurely impelled to attain; that is, he can try to realize intentions.

If he preconceives the work still to be written, he sets limits that can hinder its development. When an outline or any other structure is brought to attention, it evokes some one particular experience of meaning and force that by its very existence precludes others. William James has described exactly the narrowing effects of attention: "Focalization, concentration, of consciousness are of its essence. It implies withdrawal from some things in order to deal effectively with others. . . ." [7] When the artist gives to idea or plan the emphasis of his intention—his purpose and expectation—it tends all the more to persist and obtrude and, when dismissed, to recur and again to preëmpt his energies and exclude new ideas and images.

The need to limit foresight, to turn from all prefigurations when the new configuration is about to be formed, should not be interpreted as a need for unconsciousness, but for freedom of configurative action—which is conscious activity. A blank state of mind is unpromising. To empty the mind in the hope that the vacuum will suck up something from the reservoir of the unconscious is futile. Whatever comes to relieve the vacuity will flow from the environment or from the past, unsummoned and uncontrolled, a mere stream of sensations, perceptions, or fragments of history or case history. Sheer automatic writing, writing done without consciousness of performance, cannot produce works of art.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Some consciousness in working is essential. Even when producing in the way intimated by Milton's phrase "unpremeditated verse," the writer is acting in some degree of awareness. Housman's account of his own unpremeditated composition is conclusively clear upon this point: portions of the poem "would flow into" his "mind"—that is, would take shape in attention—and at the same time he would become aware of "unaccountable emotion . . . accompanied, not preceded, by a vague notion of the poem which they were destined to form part of." [8] What else he was aware of, besides his surroundings, he does not say. Surely we have only a partial account of the state of his consciousness. Perhaps he saw nothing else that seemed relevant to his report. The essentials he may have omitted we can discover by considering evidence available in the statements of some novelists.

In a couple of sentences, Andrew Lytle has indicated the goal of the novelist and his way of proceeding—in consciousness—toward it: "Anything, a mood, an incident, a character, an idea, can set you going; but the end must be, not any story, but the one story which will deliver the meaning. The process is the advancing discovery, always controlled, of the hidden meaning." [9] Mr. Lytle probably did not intend to imply that the meaning was from the beginning complete, preformed—hidden "in the unconscious" rather than in the future, in which it should at last be revealed as an aspect of the completed novel. In his account of the writing of *The Velvet Horn*, he reports as the typical beginning of his novels "a momentary vision of the whole" which "quickly sinks into the abyss from which it arose," leaving no more than an idea that, while seeming to be "the essence of the subject," [10] misleadingly delimits it, and thus opposes the true development of the work until the preconception is dispersed in the living action of the narrative, the concrete world of fiction. In yet another context, Mr. Lytle has remarked on "the secret involvement—the passion, even—of discovering the meaning of the book's action, which is at first inchoate." [11] The process of discovering the "hidden meaning" must be, in this view, not the revelation of a structure invisible yet fully developed, but an evolution of structure; and the "vision of the whole" must be something rather like an intuition of organic necessity requiring for its satisfaction the arrangement of material in an order not yet existent.

From the first, the novelist must be allured by some sense of meaning, force, or importance implicit in his materials and his feeling for their possibilities. Otherwise they could not engage him or

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

incite him to advance. Through the shaping of this material, the meaning and force of the work are consciously brought into being, created, in a state of sensitive, discriminating awareness. As Mr. Lytle has written, in the context first noted, "Material, any material, produces a kinetic change in the psyche of the artist." This is very much what I have been saying about esthetic structure, that it stirs the energies of the producing or receiving mind, as it makes its own light there. Such material as Mr. Lytle refers to is substance with texture and shape; it is already organized in some degree; it is structure. To summon it to attention is simultaneously to induce whatever complex of sensations and insights it can evoke and whatever play of energies it can release. The first stimulation and release, in which the novel has its essential beginning, is usually brought about unexpectedly, without the novelist's intention. The process is exemplified in that evocation which Henry James attributed to the minute particulars which initiated his imaginative excitements. The next steps in development are more fully under the writer's control. Bringing meaningful matter into the shape of a higher order than it possesses as mere raw material, he causes it to take on still greater force and significance. This is the development that James had in mind when he spoke of the promising mote of material from which he was to evolve *The Spoils of Poynton.*

James supposed that he dropped it first into dark water, where it grew like a pearl for some time in complete obscurity. But his idea of an unconscious development is not the only possible explanation of its increase, and it may not be the true one. Perhaps he was merely not watching and noting what happened as the surge of an interest momentarily aroused still continued to carry his attention, long afterward, to things not altogether obscurely related to the minute figure of that insight which he had dismissed from his thought.

James, who was so enormously perceptive, may have missed something important in the course of the developments he was reporting. In the Preface to *The American,* he declares his belief that certain superficially irrelevant images and excitements could influence his developing work so subtly that their effect was describable only in a general way and confirmable only on grounds of the strength of his impression. Reading his statement, one should have in mind James's idea that the novel was being written—seemed almost to be composing itself—under the spell of the stirring splendor of Paris:

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

I have but to re-read ten lines to recall my daily effort not to waste time in hanging over the window-bar for a sight of the cavalry the hard music of whose hoofs so directly and thrillingly appealed; an effort that inveterately failed—and a trivial circumstance now dignified, to my imagination, I may add, by the fact that the fruits of this weakness, the various items of the vivid picture, so constantly recaptured, must have been in themselves suggestive and inspiring, must have been rich strains, in their way, of the great Paris harmony.[12]

It will be noted that at the moment of its taking effect the force of the vitalizing influence was unsuspected: the scene, for all its rich impact and his delight in it, seemed a diversion from the writer's work. He was clearly conscious, however, of the components of his response—sensations, ideas, feelings, changes in the condition of his sensibility. Yet through failing to reflect on them, he remained unconscious of connections between what he experienced and that organization of sensibility and thought which his work in progress was defining.

The artist may often be unconscious of or inattentive to such relationships, not merely unaware of the manner in which they are established, but of the very fact that they exist. The operations that produce them take place without the support of will, and need no supervision of the kind that the acts of so-called conscious construction require. The writer may be unaware of his processes in production simply because he is attending to other matters of interest. He may seem to himself to be idling even while he is in some sense at work, gathering and organizing materials or impressions under stress of the very need that he may recognize later as that which impels him to construct his novel. But there is no certain evidence that construction ever takes place in complete unconsciousness, without awareness of particular substances and structures and of the quality of the appeal which these have for the writer—their weight of significance and their vital force.

Many a writer has recorded his impression that the construction of his fiction was being carried out by some other agency than himself, with perhaps the same spontaneity as in dream. I suspect the impression comes to one so deeply preoccupied that everything other than the light of the forming configurations falls into penumbra. As Andrew Lytle has said of the writing done as he was nearing the end of *The Velvet Horn*, "It possessed me. There is no other word for it. . . . I became merely an instrument. I wrote three or four pages a day, scarcely changing a word. It was as if I had divided myself into two persons, one watching and one doing. The

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

physical presence seemed a shadow."[13] The reduction of the force of all those impressions which are not of the work itself that is being formed, their removal as into a penumbra, is a familiar phenomenon. It is as if all the psychic action must be confined, as nearly as possible, to that which is realizing itself in the esthetic configurations (the imprints of structure) that are being determined. The essential of this state, not of unconsciousness but of extreme concentration, is spontaneity. Its contrary is willed and deliberate construction. Spontaneous work is likely to occur after the writing has advanced beyond the necessity for calculated striving or at intervals between periods of such striving. It is inevitable at the moment of inception and in the earliest stages thereafter when nothing is yet settled enough to be submitted to deliberation.

The writer beginning in utmost incertitude will nevertheless be consciously at work. In the extreme, he may be aware of no more than a brooding suspension in shapeless expectation. The first intimation may come as it did to Virginia Woolf, as a puzzling, disturbing thought too vague for exact formulation, determining the drift of meditation and finding one and another focus of meaning: "It is this that is frightening and exciting in the midst of my profound gloom, depression, boredom, whatever it is. One sees a fin passing far out. . . . All I mean to make is a note of a curious state of mind. I hazard the guess that it may be the impulse behind another book." More than four years later she wrote: "Here in the few minutes that remain, I must record, heaven be praised, the end of *The Waves*. . . . I have netted that fin in the waste of water which appeared to me over the marshes out of my window at Rodmell when I was coming to an end of *To the Lighthouse*."[14]

The manifest beginning of a novel is usually in the author's awareness of something more definite, often an image rich in implications, like that image of children which Faulkner has repeatedly described as the beginning of *The Sound and the Fury*. If the author recalling the first intimations that came to him of the materials and the interests out of which his story appears to have arisen can find in them no rich suggestiveness, he is considering elements belonging to the history of the work before the moment of their integration marked the beginning of its life. The story may not be said to have begun until some change in such separate and inert objects, an alteration in the given events or actors, a shift in their relationships, or the like, engenders a quick expansion of the mind, attended by a passionate play of nameless impulse out of which

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

he feels that a whole work may evolve. All is suddenly enveloped in an atmosphere of indeterminate promise. Joseph Conrad has reported his finding the first hint that led to *Nostromo* in a striking but brief story heard in his early youth somewhere in the Gulf of Mexico, then years later read in a book, there confirmed as to its facts but not much elaborated and in itself of no apparent value. Heard, then read, the bare narrative of a ruffian who had stolen a lighter full of silver during a revolution and had grown slowly rich suggested no fiction worth writing. Yet Conrad's second encounter with the story, the reading, brought the first stir and expansion of quickening awareness in which the life of a new work could be felt: "memories of that distant time when everything was so fresh, so surprising, so venturesome, so interesting—bits of strange coasts under the stars, shadows of hills in the sunshine, men's passions in the dusk, gossip half-forgotten, faces grown dim. . . . Perhaps, perhaps, there still was in the world something to write about." There was no structure as yet, only a strong flood of memories widening in the diastole of that pulse which was to beat in the novel. The earliest formative action, the systole that began the movement of the work, concentrating and limiting the plenitude of substance in a definite structure, occurred in the stroke of a first insight, the perception that the thief could be a different kind of man than the facts had represented. Then came "the first vision of a twilight country which was to become the province of Sulaco, with its high shadowy sierra and its misty campo for mute witnesses of events flowing from the passions of men short-sighted in good and evil."[15]

The nature of the developing insight is apparent: here is no imprint of a matrix perfectly defined, no sudden intrusion of finished forms, as the concept of "the unconscious" has suggested to so many. The process that brings the new insight to shape seems to be rather that of instantaneous assembly of many materials drawn from a vast and shifting perspective: the aggregation of elements forced into unitary life in a moment of consciousness dominated by need, need that must find its immediate satisfaction in the structuring of a moment of insight, but that is wholly to be fulfilled only little by little in a sequence of similar shapings and realizations. The active conception, the construction that we would relegate to darkness, can be seen taking place in the succession of such moments of light in the mind of the artist, each moment a configurative act, an event both cognitive and dynamic.

Many intervals of conscious activity of a different kind are re-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

quired for mastery of all the materials that will serve in the moments of construction. In his Author's Note Conrad reports the long elaboration of his "knowledge of the country" of Sulaco: the region, its history, the organization of its affairs, and much else. The atmosphere in which such concentrated work must go on, in the narrowed focus of considerations, is not the most favorable for free, creative construction. The necessary close concern with detail establishes, one after another in the field of attention, firm figures of insight that keep in continual play the psychic energies intrinsic in the process of their apprehension. In the degree that concentration is complete, other meanings and forces are suppressed. Yet work in this mode is indispensable. It is deliberate, voluntary labor accomplished by processes of scrutiny, discrimination and classification, evaluation and selection, and of calculated assembly and adjustment of things to one another.

Such processes and states of attention contrast remarkably with those that are typical of the novelist's spontaneously constructive activity. Aware mainly of worlds of varied and subtle intimations shifting the unsettled possibility he senses as the promise of realizations still to be seized, the novelist may seem to be almost in a trance. Any thing that emerges strongly and clearly into focal attention out of that hovering swarm does so at the expense of all the others: they become its background and begin to diminish and fade. When the vision is full and intense, it subsists without focus, without clear center or foreground, as if it were really the background of some figure mysteriously absent—known only by the suggestive vitality of perspectives vibrant with undeclarable purport.

Ordinarily what we note clearly and recall easily is figure, structure standing out in relief from its context. Figure, strongly focused configuration, however transitory it may be, is the distinguishing mark of the ordinary, predominant state of consciousness. In its lack of concentration upon figure, the visionary experience is a little like unconsciousness. To those who are careless of that kind of experience, or inattentive to it when it occurs, it can hardly bring more than the vaguest qualification of the atmosphere surrounding the objects in which their interests are invested. It does not readily persist among the excitements of daily life. Conrad has reported more than one instance of its dispersal by intruders from the outer world. His description of perhaps the earliest of these destructions shows how easily the more usual state of consciousness replaces the visionary through drawing attention to a focus:

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"'*It has set at last,' said Nina to her mother, pointing to the hills behind which the sun had sunk.*" . . . These words of Almayer's romantic daughter I remember tracing on the grey paper of a pad which rested on the blanket of my bedplace. They referred to a sunset in Malayan Isles, and shaped themselves in my mind, in a hallucinated vision of forests and rivers and seas, far removed from a commercial and yet romantic town of the northern hemisphere. But at that moment the mood of visions and words was cut short by the third officer, a cheerful and casual youth, coming in with a bang of the door and the exclamation: "You've made it jolly warm in here."[16]

The words that thus "shaped themselves . . . in a hallucinated vision" did not disperse the vision, I suppose, because they confirmed in the dynamic sequences of specific purport and action some transitory condition in the whole agitation of immensity amid which they arose like a wave in perfect conformity with the general motion. In the usual course of uninterrupted composition, continuing without hindrance from within the mind or from the environment, such a passage is a momentary formation, turned away from almost as soon as it is imprinted in attention. Dwelt upon, considered and reconsidered, the individual pattern would diminish the whole movement to its own small dance, repeated. But, formed in an instant and overpassed by the shifting interest of the writer intent on the whole scope of his vision, it yields place to whatever configuration may take shape in the next moment of light.

The novelist in "the mood of visions and words," continually transcending each moment of focal awareness in turning away from the figure defined in it, is averting his interest from all that the consciousness of ordinary daily life embraces and is deserting the way of functioning that is usually thought of as consciously constructive. In his advance, he depends finally for guidance on no habitual order of action or familiar body of insight, for these could lead him to nothing more than what he already knows and possesses, or to some variant of it. He looks forward with strong premonition, his only means of knowing the object of his search, since that object has no manifest form, no known configuration. In this mood, he measures the value of everything by the possibility he senses of making it something else than it is simply in itself, of giving it a different meaning and force, either by altering it or by bringing it under pressure of new associations, or by both means. He is guided by allurements, like a man in extreme need, seizing and manipulating spontaneously whatever available materials of his medium can, altered or unaltered, taken separately or together, in any degree

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

satisfy immediately his desire for something otherwise indeterminate and unsuppliable. But he is obviously neither unconscious nor striving for unconsciousness as he does so. On the contrary. He is trying to gather into the field of his attention, out of an unsettled plenitude such as that of Conrad's "hallucinated vision," some concrete materials and to shape them and give them, with others, an order that when it is completed will have the force of a generalization—the meaning of his whole novel—which he can grasp in no other way.

In this process, the novelist can permit no precept, plan, idea, symbol, myth, or other construct, however sound and significant in itself, to impose its order on his material, as a fundamental determinant of its purport. For every such construct has its own individual force and meaning, which cannot be identical with that which he is in search of. At most it can be an approximation—and the approximate in art is botchery and deprivation. As the work continues, the novelist will appreciate its character, more or less fully and correctly, and will become aware of possibilities for its development. These discriminations too, as they issue in definite formations of insight, can endanger the integrity of his work or block its progress if they are misused to regulate its shaping, rather than to direct attention, as they properly can, to materials and structures to be explored and either rejected or else developed for use in actual composition. Andrew Lytle's struggle to estimate correctly the idea that falsely appeared "at first to be the essence of the subject" of *The Velvet Horn* shows the problem of dealing with such constructs, of mastering them and turning them to account, and the necessity for doing so, as he says, through "the conscious use of the craft of fiction." [17]

In the end, if the novel succeeds it will of course be shaped by all the resources of the craftsman and artist, working in both the spontaneous and the voluntary modes, either in alternate periods or almost simultaneously. Recording his impressions while writing "Blackberry Winter," Robert Penn Warren has indicated exactly the characteristic opposition and accord between the two modes: "the balance, tension, interplay—or what you will—between a sense of compulsion, a sense that the story was writing itself, and the flashes of self-consciousness and self-criticism." [18] The necessary relation between the two modes of production is clarified further in an interview in which he is reported to have said of his novels, "Whatever patterns there are, develop, aren't planned—the really basic patterns, I mean, the kind you live into. As for confession,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that wouldn't have occurred to me. . . . When you try to write a book—even objective fiction—you have to write from the inside not the outside—the inside of yourself. . . . And of course you have to have common sense enough and structural sense enough to know what is relevant." [19] As Conrad has written of the composition of *Nostromo*, "mind and will and conscience are engaged to the full." [20] It must be so if the narrative is to attain its own form. In the actual shaping of the work, the novelist must control through intense awareness both the spontaneous and the voluntary processes of his production, conforming every part of his work to the demands of an ultimate subjective authority which overrides the compulsions both of automatism and intention.

Working in this way, he will be aware continually of the "fin passing . . . far out in the waste of water," that he is striving to capture. It will never be captured—that is, envisaged—as a simple and single shape. What he will envisage is the myriad successive shapes that when they have been refined and structured into sequence will cluster and constellate and compose the whole of his novel. Not one of his apprehensions, each defined in its turn and displaced by others, each representative of some essential in the total meaning and force that comprises and transcends it, can fill the perspective of his vision haunted by suggestions of an invisible presence. That perspective is filled at last with all the protean diversity of configurations that the writer shapes and assembles under pressure of a pervasive urgency served by his entire insight and skill.

Conrad has intimated his admirably just sense of the nature and function of these configurations, in a letter discussing the novelist's management of words, the mere conventional substance of his design: "words, groups of words, words standing alone, are symbols of life, have the power in their sound or their aspect to present the very thing you wish to hold up before the mental vision of your readers. The things 'as they are' exist in words; therefore words should be handled with care lest the picture, the image of truth abiding in facts, should become distorted—or blurred." [21] "Truth"—what Conrad calls in the "Preface" to *The Nigger of the Narcissus* "the truth of life"—is the object of the writer's more general motivation that finds its particular goals in accurate and clear configurations, the multitude of apprehensions of a life that exceeds these specifications, yet can declare itself only through them. It is the fin passing in a swirl of waters, more elusive than Proteus himself.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

REFERENCES

1. E. M. Forster, "On Criticism in the Arts, Especially Music," *Harper's Magazine.* 1166 (July 1947) 12.
2. Henry James, *The American.* New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1922, vii.
3. Ralph S. Walker, *Ben Jonson's Timber or Discoveries.* Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1953, 86.
4. Katherine Mansfield, *The Letters of Katherine Mansfield.* New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1936, 330.
5. Richard P. Blackmur, Introduction to *The Art of the Novel, Critical Prefaces by Henry James.* New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1934, xv.
6. Paul Hindemith, *The Craft of Musical Composition.* New York: Associated Music Publishers, Inc., 1942, Book I, 138.
7. William James, *The Principles of Psychology.* 2 vols.: New York: Dover Publications, 1950, I, 404.
8. A. E. Housman, *The Name and Nature of Poetry.* Cambridge, England: University Press, 1950, 48.
9. Andrew Lytle, *A Novel, A Novella and Four Stories.* New York: McDowell, Oblensky, 1958, xiii-xiv.
10. _____, "The Working Novelist," *Dædalus,* vol. 88, no. 2 (Spring 1959), 327, 328.
11. Quoted by Kirk Polking, "Five Publishers in Search of an Author," *Writer's Digest,* vol. 38, no. 8 (August, 1958) 32.
12. Henry James, *The American,* xi.
13. Andrew Lytle, "The Working Novelist," 337-338.
14. Virginia Woolf, *A Writer's Diary.* New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1954, 100, 165.
15. Joseph Conrad, *Nostromo.* Edinburgh, London: John Grant, 1925, ix.
16. _____, *A Personal Record.* Edinburgh, London: John Grant, 1925, 4.
17. Andrew Lytle, "The Working Novelist," 327-328.
18. Robert Penn Warren, " 'Blackberry Winter': A Recollection," in *Understanding Fiction,* 2nd edition, by Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1959, 638.
19. _____, in *Writers at Work, The Paris Review Interviews,* edited by Malcolm Cowley. New York: The Viking Press, 1958, 195.
20. Joseph Conrad, *A Personal Record.* 98.
21. _____, *Joseph Conrad: Life and Letters,* by G. Jean-Aubry, 2 vols.: New York: Doubleday Page and Co., 1927, I, 280.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THOMAS MOSER

Towards *The Good Soldier*— Discovery of A Sexual Theme

IMPRESSIONISTIC NOVELISTS like James, Conrad, and Ford aim, in Conrad's familiar phrase, "above all, to make you *see*." The reader is to see things through the eyes of one of the characters—through Lambert Strether, or Marlow, or Dowell—rather than from the author's omniscient viewpoint. This "impersonal" method of narration has contributed, time and again, to modern fiction's finest achievement: the intense involvement of the reader with the moral and emotional life of the characters. Yet seeing through a character sometimes means not seeing at all clearly. The reader may find himself saying, "Yes, the narrator views things this way, but how are they *really*?" Even those of us who think that to torment a reader about the nature of reality is, in itself, a worthy purpose must grant that the use of impersonal narration raises special problems.

No novel better dramatizes these problems than Ford Madox Ford's *The Good Soldier* (1915). Careful readers of good will, in utter disagreement as to the reliability of its narrator, seem not to be discussing the same book. Is it the tragic story of a good soldier destroyed by his passionate involvement with three women, a story told sympathetically and accurately by the hero's best friend? Or is it instead a story of five immoral fools, told by the greatest fool of them all? Is it really what Ford first entitled it, "the saddest story," or is it a masterpiece of bitterly comic irony?[1]

Such differing responses to the same work suggest the need to supplement the exegetical method. In the case of *The Good Soldier*, several approaches seem potentially useful. An examination, for instance, of the biographical material—Ford's "nervous breakdown" in 1904, his marital and extramarital difficulties of 1909 and after—might provide clues to the novel. So, too, would a study of Ford's

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

reading, particularly of his two masters, James and Conrad: James's novels of innocence in conflict with illicit passion, *What Maisie Knew* and *The Wings of the Dove;* Conrad's novels of the flawed romantic hero, *Lord Jim,* and of repressed passion, *Chance.* Again, one might approach *The Good Soldier* through similar novels in which the author's intention and what he created appear to conflict and in which sexual passion is, at least, an implied subject. One thinks here of James's *Turn of the Screw* and of Glenway Wescott's *The Pilgrim Hawk.*

The avenue that this essay will follow, however, is that of Ford's earlier fiction. A novelist, we know, may deal again and again with similar characters, situations, and subjects. Sometimes a recurring character evokes the writer's deepest understanding; sometimes a character ceases to engage the author's interest and subsides into a minor role. The reader may therefore detect in earlier works prefigurations of the novel in question or may see a trend evolving, and thus he may make an educated guess about what the artist "really meant."

The quest for sources and analogues, in fact, has often led literary sleuths wildly astray. Although the study of Ford's earlier male characters tends to confirm my view of Dowell as primarily a reliable narrator, despite ironic overtones, and of Ashburnham as a sympathetic, if sentimental and banal, hero, I recognize that Ford could have suddenly reversed his attitude toward these types. Conrad, after years of sympathetically, if unconsciously, dramatizing sexual reticence, became aware at last of the inhibitions of his romantic hero and attacked them in *Chance,*[2] published only two years before *The Good Soldier.* Again, the patterns in Ford's early works may point only to his initial intention in *The Good Soldier* rather than to what the novel actually conveys. Even though Ford may have thought he admired Ashburnham and sympathized with Dowell, a more censorious creative instinct may have dramatized them as fools. Whether or not this pursuit of prefigurations in minor Ford novels ultimately answers the question of *The Good Soldier,* it should at least lead us back to the major work with a richer sense of its hidden sources. Finally, of course, the text itself must yield its essence, must reveal that authentic "quality of the mind of the producer" which James calls the novel's "deepest quality."

In 1927, looking back twelve years to *The Good Soldier,* Ford saw it not only as one of his best works—the first into which he had put "all that I know about writing"—but also as a culmination of

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

over twenty years of creativity: "as the Great Auk I considered that, having reached my allotted, I had lain my one egg and might as well die." Certainly a reading of the previous novels supports Ford's own evaluation: they are relatively worthless (only four historical novels, *The Fifth Queen* trilogy and *A Portrait,* merit reading for themselves). Yet their male characters strikingly anticipate *The Good Soldier.* Dowell is simply one of many sensitive, passive heroes. Early versions of this type, Ford depicts as wholly admirable: they are gentle, idealistic, talented, intellectually superior, and attractive to women. Nancy's father, Colonel Rufford, a very minor figure in *The Good Soldier,* represents a remnant of another important early type —the father-ogre: a physically and sexually powerful person with a harsh, brutal voice, who often, deliberately or inadvertently, opposes the passive hero. Finally, Ashburnham belongs to a type that emerges later than the other two: the bluff, physically active, non-intellectual hero, frequently of "county" aristocracy, often attractive to women but of uncertain sexual power.

If *The Good Soldier* represents Ford's first successful treatment of recurrent character types, it also reveals his first effective control of attitudes toward sexual passion previously in disastrous conflict. Repeatedly in the early novels, a desirable young woman presents herself to the hero, even as Florence makes herself available to Dowell on the night of their elopement and as Nancy appears "suddenly to Edward, rising up at the foot of his bed, with her long hair falling, like a split cone of shadow . . . a silent, a no doubt agonized figure, like a spectre, suddenly offering herself to him. . . ." And the early hero, like Dowell and Ashburnham, usually refuses the girl. But whereas Ford understands Dowell's reason (he is psychically impotent) and Ashburnham's reason (he would die rather than defile his ward), Ford does not understand why his early heroes fail to respond to proffers of love. He asserts that the hero refuses for some high ideal, and the tone is obviously sympathetic. In certain works of non-fiction of the period, he further suggests that English "delicacy," English repression of feelings, the "ferocious lack of imagination" of the English can cause such personal disasters.[3] In *The Good Soldier,* Dowell implies the same idea in his ironic account of the two couples as "good people" whose life together looks as decorous as a minuet, yet is in reality a "prison full of screaming hysterics."

Yet the motive for refusal that Ford actually dramatizes in the early novels is simply sexual fear, sometimes the result of an Oedipal

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

situation. Presumably, if Ford had understood that his heroes were paralyzed by fear of their sexual partners, he would have pitied rather than admired them and would have treated ironically their idealistic rationalizations. These early novels show instead how crippling to his artistry was Ford's lack of insight into the nature of his subject. Of nineteen novels published before 1915, five deal more obviously than the others with Ford's chief theme, modern man caught in the toils of passion: *The Shifting of the Fire* (1892), *The Benefactor* (1905), *An English Girl* (1907), *A Call* (1910), and *The Panel* (1912).

At twenty, Ford Madox Hueffer, young genius of the pre-Raphaelite circle, with two book-length fairy tales already in print, published his first novel, *The Shifting of the Fire*. Grossly inept, it is nevertheless instructive. It reveals Ford's sympathy for his passive hero, his hatred and fear of the older male generation, and his hero's unconscious anxiety in implicitly sexual situations. The novel's ostensible subject is a natural one for a beginning novelist: the pardonable human folly of youthful idealism. It tells how a pair of lovers, out of exaggerated concern for each other's feelings, raise almost insurmountable barriers to their marriage. After Clem Hollebone, a sensitive medical scientist, has impoverished himself in order to save the creditors of his firm, he refuses to let Edith marry a pauper and vows never to see her again. Determined not to lose her beloved, Edith sacrifices herself by secretly marrying the eighty-year-old Kasker-Ryves, in the hope of soon being a wealthy widow. Clem discovers the marriage and at first hates Edith. But at last, after he has recovered his own fortune and Kasker-Ryves has died, Clem comes to realize that his original rejection of Edith was selfish and that her marriage, though foolish, was a noble gesture. The novel ends with Clem and Edith happily embarked on their honeymoon.

Ford's depiction of the conflict between generations gives *The Shifting of the Fire* the little energy and interest it possesses. Ford instinctively contrasts Kasker-Ryves' vigor and appalling sexual prowess with the weakness of his son and Clem. A blatantly Oedipal situation emerges that obtains in many of Ford's subsequent novels: a violent old man, intimately involved either as husband or father with a lovely young girl, inhibits the gentle, idealistic young hero.

In three similar scenes involving Kasker-Ryves, his fainting bride, and a young man, Ford dramatizes, no doubt unconsciously, the old man's sexual superiority to the youth. In the first scene Kasker-Ryves describes to his son within Edith's hearing the sexual exploits of his

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

salad days. So vivid is the account that his son, "a mere tyro in vice," positively gasps for breath. In his revulsion, he cries out within himself, "Good God! are all men in the world such villains? Is it possible that I am the only person in all the world that struggles against my passions?" When Edith faints at the sound of her husband's voice, Kasker-Ryves symbolically acts out his lust before his frightened son: he "flung himself in his eagerness on her body, and . . . fell to kissing her clay-cold face."

In the other two fainting scenes, Clem plays the role of the passive youth. In the first, he finds himself, under Kasker-Ryves' interested gaze, physically unable to pick up the unconscious Edith. Only on the third try can he lift her, "and he closed his eyes as he staggered with her to the sofa." The action here suggests that Clem finds it difficult to handle his beloved in the old man's presence and that he cannot bear to look upon her, either because of gentlemanly reticence or, more likely, because of fear of his own inadequacy. The other scene shows Kasker-Ryves again symbolically triumphant, even in death. Clem, witnessing the grotesque action, feels "a sudden sense of incongruous horror" as Edith embraces her dead husband and, fainting of course, pulls his body to the ground: the corpse "lay, stiff and unnatural like an artist's figure, across Edith."

So thoroughly amateurish is *The Shifting of the Fire* that one can scarcely confine the blame for its ineptitude to Ford's unawareness of Clem's sexual anxiety. Moreover, the sentimental account of Kasker-Ryves' deathbed reformation and the picture of Clem, ultimately and serenely, at one with his beloved are no more implausible than everything else that happens. Yet this little apprentice piece, with its unconscious portrait of a passive and disabled young hero, contains the seed of future failures. In the next three novels to be considered, Ford's interests are much more deeply engaged; hence the failures are more radical—and more interesting.

After writing *The Shifting of the Fire,* Ford collaborated with Conrad on two novels, but published none of his own until *The Benefactor* (1905). Although Ford occasionally satirizes George Moffatt gently, this sensitive, kind, self-sacrificing, talented writer clearly belongs to the same type of passive hero as Clem Hollebone. George's sacrifices, including a handsome separation settlement on his wife, have left him virtually a pauper. When he and Clara Brede, the daughter of a neighboring clergyman, fall in love, George finds himself in Clem's situation, and *The Benefactor* falls into the pattern of *The Shifting of the Fire.* The barriers facing George are, however,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

even more numerous. He is penniless and tied to another woman; his beloved's father has decreed that Clara must never leave home. While he is certainly not an evil man, Mr. Brede recalls Kasker-Ryves in his "magnificent" physique, his "fierce energy," and in his "impressive harshness of temper." Moreover, like Kasker-Ryves, Brede has caused his wife's death. A heart-patient, she has a fatal spasm upon hearing her husband's "tremendous voice . . . blowing up a stable-boy." Guilt over this accident so unhinges Brede's mind that Clara's constant presence is required.

By part four, "The Bankrupt Jeweler," George has plunged to the same depths as did Clem when he was an impoverished country doctor; he has reached the classic stage in the career of the Fordian hero: financially ruined, physically exhausted, mentally depressed almost to the point of suicide, and deprived, apparently forever, of the only woman he really loves. At this point, just as in *The Shifting of the Fire,* a great reversal occurs: George's fortunes are restored when one of his books miraculously becomes a best seller and Brede, having suffered a relapse, is permanently institutionalized. George realizes that there is "no one now between himself and Clara Brede."

When, at the end of James's *The Ambassadors,* Lambert Strether can have Maria Gostrey but instead chooses to return to America, his reasons are complex, arguable, but certainly *there.* And when, at the end of *The Wings of the Dove,* Kate Croy's lover Merton Densher, whom James modeled upon Ford, imposes impossible conditions on their marriage, the reasons for that rejection are completely clear and unarguable. But since the explicit motivations of *The Benefactor* point clearly to the union of George and Clara, his rejection of her not only violates the logic of the novel but directs the reader's attention to the hero's unconscious reasons.

The language of the last scene between the lovers suggests powerfully that Clara longs to have George take her and that he fears to. Awaiting his arrival, she thinks: "her father was gone now . . . it would be easy." George's first impulse is to ask her to go to Italy with him but that would be "too brusque." As they talk, her heart starts "to beat rapidly." Yet she wants him not to speak "too soon . . . she was not ready; it would spoil everything." Presently she lies back in her chair.

> He stepped towards her recumbent figure. It was as if already he held her in his arms; as if she had said, "Ah!" as if her head had fallen back. Suddenly it slipped into his mind, like an odd thought that he regarded contemptuously, "This is seduction."

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

She wondered for one swift moment what it felt like to be dishonored. Was it like a pain? She had looked coldly at other women. He was coming: she shut her eyes. . . . She felt in herself no dishonor, but the glory of sacrificing herself to him—But he was coming, and she shivered. Outside the darkness of her closed lids something paralysing, something terrible and blissful was coming towards her.

Instead Clara hears George say: "But it's too—" At the very moment of her complete surrender, George finds his masculine aggressiveness dissipated by the memory of Brede: "The black and tremendous figure of her father had risen before George's eyes once more." Almost immediately George rationalizes; he seems to hear men's voices saying, "Oh, Brede. He's in a lunatic asylum, and his daughter ran away with a married man." George, and probably Ford, believes that his honor prevents him from seducing the daughter of his helpless friend. But "black and tremendous figure" describes not senility but a powerful masculinity before which George must quail. And so *The Benefactor* ends with Clara and George apart—an improbable conclusion in artistic terms, but striking evidence of the passive hero's *malaise* and of Ford's unconsciousness of it.

His next novel of love in the modern world, *An English Girl* (1907), closely resembles its predecessor. Once again the hero fails to marry the desirable young woman, and once again the memory of a powerful old man exercises a fatal inhibition. Yet the novel represents a new departure in two important ways. First, *An English Girl* contains the earliest example of the vigorous, conventional hero, the type to which Ashburnham belongs. In *The Benefactor* a rival of George appears only briefly in the person of Clara's cousin Carew, of "large attractions and stock-whip mannerisms." Second, Ford attempts, in the epilogue, an explicit justification of his passive hero's improbable failure.

The barriers to the marriage of Don Kelleg, an expatriate young American artist, and Eleanor Greville, a handsome English girl, appear minor. Don merely wishes, before the marriage, to return briefly to America to try to repair some of the damage done by the dishonest business practices of his late, fabulously wealthy father. Eleanor agrees enthusiastically to accompany Don to America, with her father as chaperone and her cousin Augustus as legal advisor to Don. Eleanor and Don view the expedition as merely a minor delay to their nuptials: "our excursion to the new world is just going down into the basement to borrow a hammer." A potential complication to their ultimate plans is Augustus' passion for Eleanor. Although she

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

repeatedly rejects his pleas to break off her engagement with Don, that "tamest sort of cat," and although, on the boat, she repels Augustus' violent advances, Eleanor does not forget the "hungry warmth" of his kisses.

Don's mission to America proves much more complicated and disillusioning than he had ever dreamed. Don's failure to right his father's wrongs, and his inferiority to Augustus as a lover, merge in a climactic and unintentionally amusing scene in a New York hotel. To "re-act against his father," Don has deliberately chosen the suite that he and his parents occupied during much of his wretched childhood. The rooms are full of memories of that powerful, ironic father who finally left mother and son in order to take a mistress. One evening, Don receives a telephone call from Augustus about his father's will. Sensing something sinister in Augustus' tone, Don summons Eleanor for moral support. Although the situation is ideal for seduction, nothing is further from Don's mind when, legs trembling, he walks to the hotel telephone to call Eleanor. Everything in the room

> affected him deeply with a sense of solitude, a sense of smallness, a sense of impotence that he hadn't felt since he had been a small child. And the repeated mention of his father's name had brought a tense sense of his father again before him. His father had sat on those very chairs, had looked at those very pictures with his twinkling badger grey eyes of a man used to baffle and outwit. He suddenly felt as if his father were once more saying: "Not this time, sonny!"

And so it turns out. Kelleg, Sr., has willed his son the income but barred him from interfering with the business. In Augustus' malicious words, Don is "absolutely impotent." At this news he faints dead away while Eleanor rages at her cousin's brutality.

Although the couple returns to England in defeat without having "so much as got the hammer," there is nothing to prevent their marriage. In fact, they do buy a modest house and begin to furnish it. But suddenly Don decides that he must return to America: "I *can't* funk it." Whereupon Eleanor, who has been the soul of patience for three hundred pages, makes the classic rejoinder, "Then you know it means good-bye?"

In the light of George Moffatt's last minute rejection of Clara, and of Dowell's failure both to consummate his marriage to Florence and to propose to Nancy, this conclusion is certainly not surprising. What is unusual is the epilogue, a letter from a friend of Don's to Eleanor, justifying Don's vacillation and blaming Eleanor for her lack of faith: "Your duty was to be good, to be kind, to be dear to the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

noblest and best man you've ever seen." The letter continues to assert, preposterously, that Eleanor is afraid of her own emotions. She should have seen that Don is a "noble and unique invalid whom you might have nursed to health." Such statements suggest the extent of Ford's personal commitment to his passive heroes and his blindness to the character he has actually created. Although Don is an invalid, his problem is not frustrated idealism but fear of sexual experience. Intending to portray a noble hero, Ford has dramatized a ludicrous one. But the tone of comic irony which would suggest awareness is totally missing from the epilogue.[4]

Although *A Call* (1910) resembles all three of the earlier novels of passion, its particular affinity is with *An English Girl.* In both works the passive hero of Dowell's type has a rival in his own generation, an active character prefiguring Ashburnham. As a matter of fact, *A Call* distinctly anticipates *The Good Soldier* and differs from the earlier novels in that it contains no important, inhibiting figure from the older generation. *A Call* resembles *An English Girl* in still another respect: both novels have epilogues proposing a revised interpretation of the passive hero.

The rivals in *A Call,* like those in *An English Girl,* are of apparently very different temperaments. Robert Grimshaw, gentle, benevolent, articulate, and acutely sensitive to the feelings of others, bears the familiar attributes of the passive hero. Without profession, he is essentially a spectator, content to lounge through life looking rather like a "brown seal on the watch." Dudley Leicester, on the other hand, is big, blond, moustached, conventional, and utterly oblivious to psychological subtleties. He has the tradition of public service in his blood and shows promise of becoming a good landlord and a member of Parliament. Still, despite their apparent differences, the two exhibit almost identical attitudes toward passion: when confronted by a desirable and willing woman, they retreat, giving as reason for the withdrawal a respect for society's laws. Although the language describing these scenes suggests sexual anxiety, Ford clearly, if unconvincingly, accepts his characters' rationalizations.

Robert Grimshaw loves two women but demonstrates that he does not really want either. Dark, passionate, unstable Katya Lascarides is eager to live with him as his wife, but has private scruples against a legalized union. And although Robert firmly believes he wants "physical possession" of Katya, he refuses her in their most passionate scene. Katya makes all the advances, pulling Robert's face down on hers, rising to embrace him, whispering, "Oh, take me!

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Take me! Now!" Despite the "silent nirvana of passion" that falls, according to Ford, on Robert, he reiterates his demand for a wedding ceremony first and to her soft "I'll give you myself," responds, wearily: "No! No! . . . It's no good."

Having once proposed to Katya, he feels bound to her, resists his other love—the young, pretty, quaint Pauline—and matches her with his best friend, Dudley Leicester. Asked why he gave her up when he "wanted that child so dreadfully," Robert lays the blame on custom: "in our day and class" we have "to do what seems proper and expedient. . . . It's the sort of thing that's got to happen to make us the civilized people that we are." Still, the quality of Robert's passion for Pauline, as he himself describes it, does not inspire confidence: "I don't want to touch her . . . I want to watch her . . . I should like to cry over her. . . . I should like to kneel down and put my face in her lap and cry, and cry, and cry." The context of this speech suggests that Ford sees here only admirable sensitivity rather than neurotic regression.

Ford intends Dudley Leicester to be very different from Robert, to be a perfectly normal Englishman, "essentially monogamous," yet capable of "ardent passion." Nevertheless, in Dudley's one explicitly passionate scene, he proves as diffident and inept as Robert, and a good deal more frightened. The scene involves Dudley with a flame of his youth, Etta Stackpole. They had not married because Dudley deplored Etta's outrageous flirtations with everyone, even with Moddle, the third footman. Now, with Pauline away in the country, he finds himself seated unprotected at a dinner party beside Etta. Her old charms are only too apparent: she is "red-lipped, deep-voiced, black-haired, large, scented and utterly uncontrollable." During their conversation, Dudley fears that she will lay her head on his black shoulder and rest her white breasts on the table. Of course, she maneuvers him into taking her home.

The episode concludes in Etta's house in an unintentionally hilarious scene, which echoes the climax of *An English Girl* and gives *A Call* its name. After Etta has literally pushed Dudley into the dark hallway, she orders him to answer the insistently ringing telephone. The language employed here is implicitly sexual. Leaning over the banister, her hair dishevelled, shoulders gleaming, Etta calls out: "Don't fumble so ridiculously. Don't you know how to take the thing off the hook?" She further unnerves Dudley by instructing him to mimic, over the phone, the voice of his old rival, Moddle the third footman. And when Dudley, having stupidly revealed his identity

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to the mysterious caller, worries that Pauline will discover all, Etta laughs at him, her hard little laugh. A few days later Dudley simply goes mad. No doubt the explicit reasons for Dudley's collapse—excessive concern over Pauline's feelings and over public opinion—are partly valid. Yet an even more important cause is the terrorizing presence of the massive, passionate Etta. It is important, however, to note that in this scene Ford clearly recognizes how foolish Dudley is, just as he will recognize Ashburnham's foolishness in the early portions of *The Good Soldier*.

Because he felt that the first readers of *A Call*, in its serial version, had misunderstood his attitude toward his passive hero, Ford added an epilogue. It is of some interest because it shows that Ford realized that he was not fulfilling his conscious intentions. The epilogue to *A Call* differs markedly from that to *An English Girl*. Whereas, in the earlier work, Ford asserts his passive hero's nobility, he here calls his hero a "meddlesome and inwardly conceited fool" who ought to have left Katya and married Pauline. These statements, although accurate so far as the implicit content of the novel is concerned, come as a shock because his presentation of Robert has been generally sympathetic, even admiring. Still, even though the epilogue is unconvincing, it bodes well for Ford's artistry that he should, however belatedly, become aware of his hero's limitations.

The Panel (1912), the last of these pre-1915 novels of passion, is much less seriously intended than *A Call*. Sub-titled "A Sheer Comedy," it borrows heavily from Congreve, Sheridan, and especially from Ford's favorite modern comedy, *The Playboy of the Western World*. *The Panel* does not conform closely to the pattern of the previous novels; no father-figure and no rival rise to threaten the hero. Nevertheless, *The Panel* is important not only because its hero, Major Edward Brent Foster, prefigures Major Edward Ashburnham in many ways but also because Ford sees Brent as a human being: although his ineptitude often merits laughter, he is capable of the passion Ford attributes to him. Brent anticipates Ashburnham, obviously, by name, profession, and rank. Moreover, Brent's four loves, albeit explicitly platonic, resemble those of *The Good Soldier*. While serving in India, he has tender moments first with Mrs. Kerr Howe, married to a "brutish" husband (the Mrs. Basil of *The Good Soldier*) and then with a "half-starved sort of little rat," Flossie Delamare (the "poor little rat," Maisie Maidan). Mustered out of military service, he is unhappily engaged to a wealthy Boston bluestocking, Olympia Peabody (Florence Dowell, graduate of Vassar); but Brent's only

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

serious love is for Mary Savylle, alias "Nancy" (Nancy Rufford).

More important than these resemblances are two comic episodes, the first of which shows Ford's capacity for amused detachment from his hero's anxieties about social conventions and about passion, the second his ability to dramatize his hero's sexual involvement with his beloved. The first episode, covering five chapters, represents the best comic writing in this slight novel. It makes Brent into a Joseph Andrews defending his virtue against four eager women. Moreover, the imagery suggests that Brent resists not only out of respect for convention and fear of Miss Peabody's wrath but also out of anxiety about the mechanics of sexual relations. Ford maintains, of course, proper decorum: the women merely ask for a kiss and Brent invariably replies no.

The funniest portion of this episode describes Brent's frantic efforts to get Flossie, who is clad in a pink peignoir, out of his room through a secret sliding panel that, unfortunately, refuses to open. Much of the dialogue and action points to the major's nervous ineptitude. Brent first begs Flossie to lend one of her candles to help him find "that blessed knob." When Flossie says that it is the "thistle thing" in the picture frame that does the trick, he implores her to "do the trick and get back to your room." Having tried "wriggling the button thing" and clicking it "up and down like a switch," Flossie gives up, sits down, kicks off her shoes, and extends her stocking feet to the fire. Then, like Etta Stackpole with Dudley, she makes mockery of Brent: "Oh, go on wiggling, I can wait." She reminds him of their tender moments together in Simla and invites him to kiss her. Meanwhile, Brent, pressing and pulling, the sweat running off his forehead, resorts to his penknife and even fumbles "in his kit bag for a little oil can he always carried with him." At last, Flossie takes pity, agrees to steal out another way, and offers him a good-night kiss: "I don't *really* think I want to, Flossie. . . . I don't—I don't believe I *can* be very well." At the end of the evening, Brent remarks wryly to himself: "four women have asked me to kiss them this night, and not once have I brought it off."

The hero's refusal of all these offers recalls, of course, the previous passive heroes and even Dudley, the "ardent" hero. Moreover, the imagery of knobs, tools and panels, and Brent's amusing incompetence resemble the unconscious dramatizations of impotence in the telephone scenes of *An English Girl* and *A Call*. But the point is that even Ford finds his hero occasionally laughable (though Ford probably intended no Freudian symbolism) and, more important,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

also knows that the hero really can at the appropriate time experience passion.

Although much bad writing separates this episode from the final scene, at the end Ford is able to bring together Brent and Mary Savylle, the girl he really loves. Appropriately enough, Ford describes their union in terms of the situation and the imagery so well managed previously. Mary steals into Brent's room through the sliding panel, closes it behind her, and stands "with her hand still on the knob, . . . panting slightly," looking "at the little secret door of escape." Elusive throughout the novel, she now resists the impulse to flight and instead calls to Brent. He responds warmly, as the comic hero should and as none of the earlier heroes has been able to; he kisses "her repeatedly upon every one of her features that his lips could be expected to reach. 'I've brought it off at last,' he gasped. 'I've kissed somebody at last.'"[5]

Three years later Ford brought off *The Good Soldier*, his greatest novel. How he really did it must remain a mystery. But surely his trials with earlier heroes helped make Dowell and Ashburnham possible. From the beginning, Ford is intensely sympathetic with his heroes, the passive and the active ones, who, caught up in passion, all suffer far more than they deserve to. What is lacking is artistic distance, the capacity to see these characters as flawed, even disabled, human beings, whose sufferings sometimes demand not admiration but pity and even irony. *A Call* and *The Panel* especially hint at the beginnings of detachment: Dudley Leicester receives mildly ironic treatment; Major Edward Brent is frankly a comic hero; Robert Grimshaw, the passive hero, elicits criticism in the epilogue if not in the novel.

Ford seems finally to have sensed the need to separate his two character-types more distinctly than he was able to in *A Call*. By frankly making Dowell into something of a eunuch, a male nurse, he was merely accepting what is implicit in the characters of Clem, George, Don and Robert. At the same time, Ford can, in Dowell, use the passive hero's explicit virtue of sensitivity, awareness of others if not always of self, to achieve an effective, complex narrator. In contrast, Ford makes his active hero truly ardent: if Ashburnham is not exactly a stallion forever neighing after his neighbor's wife, he is at least a man of passion. Even though he does not touch Maisie or Nancy and can do without his wife for years, he is nevertheless a man; when he looks at Florence, he thinks, "It might just be done," and, moreover, does it. Ford insists on Ashburnham as suffering, like

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

all the heroes in his serious novels of passion, yet now sees him at the same time as imperfect. Just as "Miss Lonelyhearts," in Nathaniel West's wonderful novel, comes to discover that utter banality, utter sentimentality, can accompany true suffering, so Ashburnham while nobly enduring pain as great as if he were being flayed can mutter bad verse under his breath. "It was like his sentimentality," comments Dowell, "to quote Swinburne."

The gradual evolution of characters in *The Good Soldier* may, of course, be viewed as simply the salutary result of constant practice in the craft of fiction. But since Ford had written excellent historical fiction much earlier, one suspects that the thinness and ineptitude of his novels of modern love arose in part from terrifyingly personal subject-matter which he had long feared to understand. If this is the case, *The Good Soldier* represents a triumph not merely of literary skill but of knowledge, self-acceptance and, even, of courage.

References

1. For differing interpretations of *The Good Soldier* see the following: John A. Meixner, "The Saddest Story," *Kenyon Review,* XXII (Spring 1960), 234-264; and Mark Schorer, "An Interpretation," *The Good Soldier,* New York, 1957, pp. v-xv.

2. See Thomas Moser, *Joseph Conrad: Achievement and Decline,* Cambridge, Mass., 1957, Chapter II; and Albert J. Guerard, *Conrad the Novelist,* Cambridge, Mass., 1958, pp. 261 ff. I should like here to acknowledge a considerable debt to Mr. Guerard and to my omniscient Fordian friend, Dr. Richard Herndon, for suggestions concerning this paper.

3. Ford Madox Ford, *England and the English,* New York, 1907, pp. 253, 337.

4. For the relations between *An English Girl* and the later Ford, see R. W. Lid, "Tietjens in Disguise," *Kenyon Review,* XXII (Spring 1960), 265-276.

5. In several of the historical novels of the period just before *The Good Soldier,* Ford succeeds in uniting hero and heroine either in actuality or in fantasy. See *The Portrait* (1910), *Ladies Whose Bright Eyes* (1911), and *The Young Lovell* (1913).

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

CLAIRE ROSENFIELD

The Shadow Within: The Conscious and Unconscious Use of the Double

THE "SYMPOSIUM" of Plato has amused us with the comic image that each of us has a Double to whom we were once physically attached. Mistaken identity, the birth and later separation of twins, a god assuming the bodily form of an absent husband—indeed, all the absurd and irrational portrayals of Doubles inherent in the comedies of civilized literature from the "Amphitryon" of Plautus to "The Comedy of Errors" by Shakespeare—have provoked our unthinking laughter. To the sophisticated audiences of the Classical World, the Middle Ages, and the Renaissance, Doubles were either facsimiles, bodily duplicates manipulated to divert us, or allegorized opposites to instruct us. Perhaps not until after the development of the novel, have we been made aware of what primitives have always intuitively known: that duality inspires both terror and awe whether that duality be manifested in a twin birth, or in a man and his shadow, or in one's reflection in water or in a mirror, or in the creation of an artifact resembling the exterior self. Not until Freud revealed the importance of the irrational in man have we been willing to admit the possibility that each of us has within us a second or a shadow self dwelling beside the eminently civilized, eminently rational self, a Double who may at any time assert its anti-social tendencies.

By analyzing superstitions, folk beliefs, and modern literature, Otto Rank has attempted to show the evolution of the Double: that "What we really have in common with our remote ancestors is a *spiritual*, not a primitive self."[1] Frightened by the possible destruction of his ego and the loss of his individuality in death, primitive man created a body-soul which he located in his shadow or his reflection, and which he deemed immortal. His very real dreams provided him with the proof that a soul must exist independent of

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the body, for in his dreams he saw the souls of the absent, of others who had died, of enemies whom he had killed. Motivated by what Freud has called his "primary narcissism," he could not grant life to others and not to himself.[2] Though his body would die and disintegrate—as had the bodies of the dead he had seen—his soul would survive as his shadow or Double.

> How man came to see the soul in his shadow may be explained by the assumption that he first saw his own image in it, inseparable from himself and yet not only changing in its form but also disappearing at night. It seems to me that this observation of the human shadow disappearing with the fertilizing sun to reappear with its return made it a perfect symbol for the idea of an immortal soul. . . . It is then, in my opinion, not so much the resemblance of the shadow to the self as its appearance and disappearance, its regular return to life, as it were, which made the shadow a symbol of the returning soul still surviving in our spiritual belief in immortality. In the original duality of the soul concept, I am inclined to see the root of man's two endeavors to preserve his self and to maintain the belief in its immortality: religion and psychology. From the belief in a soul of the dead in one form or another sprang all religion; from the belief in the soul of the living, psychology eventually developed.[3]

Possessing this belief in an immortal soul, man was able gradually to develop a personality which seemed to have an essential totality. But, Rank points out, modern literature presents the Double as a symbol not of eternal life but of death,[4] a representation which anticipates the division of the personality into two opposing forces, and a subsequent loss of a sense of identity and continuity in time.

Because the Romantic Movement made the inner life of man—spontaneity of feeling, imagination, spiritual exploration—fashionable if not respectable, nineteenth century audiences generally accepted works which revealed the two opposing selves within the human personality. But they accepted these only on terms which would not destroy communal or personal complacency, either in folk songs and stories which portrayed a primitive self in which they believed they no longer shared, or in fairy tales written down for children, or in fantasies or mystery stories which titillated the senses without disrupting equanimity. In the romance, a *genre* where by definition the imagination was allowed free play, the hero might lose his shadow as in "The Wonderful History of Peter Schlemihl," or sell his reflection to the devil as in Hoffmann's "Story of a Lost Reflection." When, however, the reader approached a work in which the disintegration of the personality was plausibly presented, he ignored it as completely as he ignored Melville's *Pierre*. Or else he

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

dismissed it as the work of a monster, as De Vogüé, who introduced Russian literature to France, dismissed Dostoevsky.[5] Dickens' terrifying *Edwin Drood* offered no threat to the mind which had created a defense mechanism almost as satisfactory as the dream work, and called the book a mystery story. And Emily Brontë, perhaps unwittingly, made her amoral, passionate fictional world palatable by sifting it through the consciousness of two extraordinarily conventional and imperceptive narrators.

That the motif of the Double should manifest itself so abundantly in the nineteenth century can be explained both culturally and psychologically. The French Revolution betrayed an irrationality in direct proportion to earlier oppression. With the "Rights of Man" came a new emphasis upon the individual. Not only did the Romantic Movement sanction introspection; it also reintroduced into society the collective inheritance of the folk. As I have already noted, the Double or *Doppelgänger* was made initially respectable in romance, fairy tale, and mystery story where repressed fantasies asserted themselves with particular vengeance in extravagant plots. But the novel requires that the opposing selves submit to the canons of plausibility. Therefore, the novelist who consciously or unconsciously exploits psychological Doubles may either juxtapose or duplicate two characters; the one representing the socially acceptable or conventional personality, the other externalizing the free, uninhibited, often criminal self. Conrad's *The Secret Sharer,* Mann's *Doctor Faustus,* Dostoevsky's *The Double* all reveal this pattern. Or he may present two characters who complement each other both physically and psychologically and who together are projections of the crippled or struggling personality of a third character with whom the author is primarily concerned, as in Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* or Melville's *Pierre.* These complementary Doubles may appear in the narrative as simple opposites; what is important is not their contrary natures and descriptions, but the way in which they reveal the loss of identity of the main character. When the passionate, uninhibited self is a woman, she more often than not is dark and the sister or half-sister of the protagonist, thus introducing the suggestion of incest, the most horrific of crimes in Christian culture. Again, the presence of biological Doubles or Twins, in a novel of psychic disintegration can suggest authorial awareness of the problem of inner duality and the subsequent terrors involved.

The first novelist to use duality consciously in order to reveal the mental struggles of his characters was Goethe. Because he was

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

contemplating a Faust play before writing *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship,* the Double motif in the former may illuminate authorial intention in the latter. What Mephistopheles mirrors in the drama is the demonic forces within the titanic Faust himself. This dynamic tension between good and evil does not appear overtly in the novel, where the young Wilhelm seeks harmony through active humanism. Part of his search for personal fulfillment involves the search for a wife. The various women he encounters seem to him but fragmentary parts of himself; many of them—actresses—appear to him first dressed as boys, playing a male role. Even the mysterious Mignon, who refuses to dress like a girl and who reveals a diabolic disorder which he has never experienced, momentarily excites his orderly soul: "He longed to incorporate this forsaken being within his own heart, to take her in his arms, and with a father's love to awaken in her the joy of existence." [6] Finally, he realizes totality in his union with Natalie, the "beautiful soul" with whom he reconciles all contraries. The modern disintegration of the self, on the other hand, is seen in the story of Mignon's parents, Sperata and Augustin, the brother and sister who unknowingly commit incest. Mignon, whose frantic artistry and behavior exist within the realm of madness, duplicates in her gradual decline the previous degradation of her parents. Because Goethe achieved a balance between the classic and romantic aspects of his own life and nature, he could construct both a positive representation of harmony and a negative picture of personality decay; few other novelists, however, were able to do the same.

When the reader confronts a novelist like Emily Brontë, all presuppositions about conscious creation disappear. So intimate was she with the projections of her own unconscious life that she may have been only intuitively aware that Cathy and Heathcliff are themselves exact Doubles differing in sex alone, and that each possesses a complementary self in his choice of a mate. Both are dark; both are accustomed to roam freely over the moors; both are proud and headstrong; both carry into maturity an energy and violence which normally is pushed into the buried self by conventional society. Both realize their similar natures. Cathy, when deciding to marry Edgar Linton, explains why she cannot forsake Heathcliff:

"My love for Heathcliff resembles the eternal rocks beneath—a source of little visible delight, but necessary. . . . I *am* Heathcliff—he's always, always in my mind—not as a pleasure, any more than I am always a

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

pleasure to myself—but as my own being—so, don't talk of our separation again—it is impracticable; and. . . ."

When dying she claims " 'That is not *my* Heathcliff. I shall love mine yet; and take him with me—he's in my soul.' " To Heathcliff Cathy is not merely a second self but also his immortal soul. It is a soul which he has destroyed, yet one which he hopes will return to haunt him.

"The murdered *do* haunt their murderers. I believe—I know that ghosts *have* wandered on earth. Be with me always—take any form—drive me mad! only *do* not leave me in this abyss where I cannot find you! Oh God! it is unutterable! I *cannot* live without my life! I *cannot* live without my soul!"

Cathy marries the blond and pallid Edgar, hoping to reconcile the refined, conventional, civilized society of the Lintons and the unconscious, passionate, natural world of childhood; she, in other words, "adopt[s] a double character without exactly intending to deceive any one." Heathcliff marries the blond and pallid Isabella not that the two worlds may coexist but rather that the world of the Lintons may be destroyed by his strength. Cathy wills her death when she discovers that she cannot reconcile these divided selves; and yet, alone, she and Heathcliff are incomplete selves. Heathcliff wills his death when he discovers that the biological entity, the child, does combine within itself those qualities which could not join within the psychological Doubles, that young Cathy does possess sweetness to tame her mother's wildness, that Hareton cannot be entirely brutalized. Cathy and Heathcliff can exist only in the world of childhood or death where capacity for freedom is infinite, where the claims of others do not impinge upon the self. The amoral landscape of *Wuthering Heights*, moreover, could only be made *respectable* by being filtered through the sensibilities of two narrators in whom Victorian mores have been so internalized that the outlaw self is completely misunderstood because completely submerged.

That Melville in *Pierre* was aware of the essential oppositions which he establishes between Lucy and Isabel, between the blond, socially sanctioned, spiritual creature and the dark, desirable, sexually forbidden half-sister Isabel, is undeniable. What he probably did not realize is the fact that these apparently conventional opposites are Doubles in the psychological sense: together they externalize the total personality Pierre must experience as an artist; separately, the disintegration he chose as a man. Professor Henry

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Murray is right in claiming that only Isabel, for whom Pierre thinks he possesses fraternal compassion but to whom he is really sexually attracted, can rescue him from the narrow maternal paradise which confines him. She alone can provide him with the tragic awareness necessary to manhood.[7] Her mysterious force suggests both madness, a longing for death, and the world of the unconscious with which society has never allowed Pierre to be troubled. In abandoning the acceptable Lucy for the desirable Isabel, he deserts the God of his Puritan fathers and his community. Once his choice is made, however, he is unable to bear the consequences of his incest, of his discovery of the abyss, of the revelation that his new God is his society's devil. When the light, rational world once more collides with his irrational one, when his now avowed "good angel" appears in the form of Lucy, Pierre has already begun to shun Isabel and her potentially tragic self as he had earlier shunned Lucy. Ironically, Lucy wishes to live as a sister with the couple whom she believes are husband and wife; but she cannot be made to live with the anarchy of incest. Finally, Pierre must die, a poor artist for the same reason he is an incomplete man: he is unable to balance the creative and destructive forces within himself.

In 1845, Charles Dickens parodied a "romance" in "Count Ludwig," a comic tale in which the Double theme is disguised by the narrative distortions. Here are no visible threats to the ego. At the end of his career in 1870 he began but never finished *The Mystery of Edwin Drood,* in which the disguised Double is less fantastic, more realistic. Choirmaster Jack Jasper is torn between his genuine devotion to his nephew and his love of that nephew's betrothed, between the respectable boredom of his occupation and his unconscious striving. His antisocial impulses reveal themselves in his predilection for opium, in his habitual appearances in the night world, and in his rambles through the privacy of the graveyard. Since the novel was never finished, we can only conjecture that Jasper's eventual distintegration culminates in the murder (or, at least, the abduction) of that nephew, a "good self." Though on a narrative level Jasper is Edwin's guardian; on a symbolic level, Edwin is the guardian angel whom Jasper dispatches. Henceforth, the forbidden dominates Jasper's behavior: he is described as possessing "destructive power"; he seems "an older devil." Dickens' conscious intention becomes obvious when we see that the novel contains two sets of biological Doubles: the "lovers" Edwin and Rosa who by agreement become like brother and sister, and the strange twins

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Neville and Helena Landless who are direct opposites. While the former are English and fair, the latter are exceedingly dark, foreign, "land less"; there is "something untamed about them both." When Neville is accused of Edwin's murder, one feels that his situation and physical characteristics alone rather than any intrinsic passion for the demonic mark him as an unconscious, criminal force and that Dickens is yielding to the romantic stereotype. Although these conventionalized Doubles add to the intricacies of the Dickensian plot, the dramatic tensions which exist within the divided soul of Jack Jasper, at once struggling for some balance and sinking deeper and deeper into the underground of the irrational, are the real energizing force of the novel.

Dostoevsky, whatever his own fears might have been, was sufficiently sensible of the tyranny of his unconscious to respond to the motif of the divided self. Throughout his career he consciously wrought variations on this theme. In 1874 in *A Raw Youth* Versilov actually describes his visual hallucination, his apparent perception which possesses no object. Although the narrator, Versilov's illegitimate son Arkady, finally gives the negative clinical diagnosis of madness to his father's disordered state, he himself accepts only the less damning idea of a split between the real man and his ego ideal.

> What is a second self, exactly? The second self, according to a medical book written by an expert that I purposely read afterward, is nothing else than the first stage of serious mental derangement, which may lead to something very bad. And in the scene at my Mother's, Versilov himself had with strange frankness described the "duality" of his will and feelings. But I repeat again, . . . that scene at Mother's and that broken ikon were undoubtedly partly due to the influence of a real "second self."

In *The Double,* Golyadkin, before the appearance of a Mr. Golyadkin Junior, evidences most of the symptoms of a developing split personality. He acts, as it were, because of a perverse inner compulsion which he cannot control. The appearance of Mr. Golyadkin Junior, who is "a double in every respect," reinforces all the protagonist's insecurities, for the new Mr. Golyadkin is not an "insect" or a "rag"; though physically similar, he possesses all those qualities for advancement—self-possession, wit, the power of decision—which the original Mr. Golyadkin lacks. Persecuted by this Double, Golyadkin Senior grows more indecisive and declines finally into madness. While he is being carried to an asylum by the doctor he had earlier consulted, he imagines that he is confronted

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in the darkness by this doctor's infernal presence whose eyes glitter in "hellish glee."

In Conrad's *The Secret Sharer* and *Heart of Darkness*, a bodily Double is present whose outlaw freedom is evidence for the narrator and the reader that even the most rational man possesses a dual nature, that no man is above the threat of the irrational. As Albert J. Guerard has pointed out, both Marlow and the young captain must "come to know themselves . . . , must recognize their own potential criminality and test their own resources, *must travel through Kurtz* and *Leggatt*, before they will be capable of manhood. . . ." [8] In both short novels the actual journeys which the two narrators take "exploit the ancient myth or archetypal experience of the 'night journey,' of the provisional descent into the primitive and unconscious sources of being." [9] The final choice each makes symbolizes the choice between internal division or personal coherence. The young captain hides the murderer Leggatt with whom he identifies himself even though this new allegiance may mean his isolation from a crew and a command which he does not know, may foster irresponsibility to his fellow men. Surely the repeated use of such phrases as "the secret sharer of my cabin," "my secret double" indicates Conrad's intentional pursuit of the *Doppelgänger* motif. Marlow's journey into the Congo for Kurtz is also a journey into the recesses of the mind; the actual jungle and its darkness mirror the intricacies of the internal landscape. When Marlow pursues a crawling Kurtz driven to the last extremity of madness, he describes him as "that Shadow," "the nightmare of my choice," "the shade." Both the captain and Marlow emerge from their visions of criminal freedom. In so far as the hero does return from the underworld of his being and is able to use his new knowledge for the benefit of his fellow men—as do the captain and Marlow—the Double novel reveals not a disintegration of the personality but a reintegration, a recognition of the necessary balance between order and freedom.[10]

When Henry James attempts a variation on the Double theme in *The Jolly Corner*, he consciously employs the alter-ego to suggest possible future events which might have occurred had Spencer Brydon remained in America. Brydon pursues and, finally, is pursued by his projection of his "real," "waiting life." Because this "life" appears as a prediction of what he might have been, it suggests the primitive belief that the sight of one's self may be an anticipation of death. Indeed, Spencer's second self appears twice in Alice Staverton's dreams—the primitive's evidence of the immortal soul.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

But Spencer's vision is a vision of an evil self pursuing him:

> It came upon him nearer now, quite as one of those expanding fantastic images projected by the magic lantern of childhood: for the stranger, whoever he might be, evil, odious, blatant, vulgar, had advanced as for aggression, and he knew himself give ground.
> . . . His head went round; he was going; he had gone.

His loss of consciousness is a symbolic death; his revival of "rich consciousness" is in his own eyes a rebirth: "He had come back, yes—come back from further away than any man but himself had ever traveled." And he says to Alice Staverton: " 'You brought me literally to life.' " He, too, has achieved knowledge on his "night journey," but he denies the major implication of his descent into the irrational; that is, that the possibility of such a horrible life still exists within him. " 'But this brute, with his awful face—this brute's a black stranger. He's none of *me*, even as I *might* have been.' "

Double novels become Devil novels in a social context which places a negative value upon what is free and uninhibited. Freud states that psychologically, the Devil is simply the projection into the external world of man's buried instinctual life.[11] But Hebraic-Christian mythology, not Freud, assigned the perjorative word "evil" to that projection. Primitive religions made no distinction between gods and devils; the gods were both worshipped and feared. According to Rank, the original Double, when it was insurance against the destruction of the self, was a guardian angel; later it "appears as precisely the opposite, a reminder of the individual's mortality, indeed the announcer of death itself." [12] The Church, which used the belief in immortality as a means of distributing rewards and punishments, created the Devil as we know him today and the destructive concept of the Double. Poe's "William Wilson" is one of the few examples in which the whispering Double appears as a "guardian angel" seeking to annul the evil of the narrator.

In *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner,* one of the clearest examples of the Devil Novel, James Hogg has skillfully juxtaposed primitive superstition, diabolism, religious fanaticism, and psychic disintegration in a perilous equilibrium which threatens constantly to dissolve. The bodily Doubles are two brothers: George Colwan, the legitimate heir of the gay laird of Dalcastle who has a fanatic wife; and Robert Wringhim, the son of that wife and her spiritual guide. Usually, the Double-Devil Novel makes the "free" self the evil self. To promote Hogg's religious satire, however, the evil brother is not the gay, spontaneous, fun-loving George,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

who has instinctive moral goodness, but the son of Wringhim who is obsessed with his belief in absolute predestination, that salvation depends upon the grace of God alone. Moreover, he believes that he is one of God's elect and, in the name of that election but actually because of a classic split personality, he commits the most criminal acts, including the murder of his own brother. The novel's formal structure reproduces the double motif: the first part purports to be an objective account of "traditionary facts," using the third person point of view of an editor who is not James Hogg; the second part is the private memoirs of Robert Wringhim.

In the second part, the extent of Robert's madness is finally ascertained. In these confessions we see that all Robert's evil acts are sanctioned by his "friend" who he does not realize is the Devil until it is too late. Now demonology bows to pathology. Is his friend simply a projection of his mental aberration and a manifestation of his disorder? Not only is he completely driven by his belief in his own divine justification, but he reveals several psychotic symptoms. He hates women; he suffers from some nervous disease which he attributes to witchcraft.

> Immediately after this I was seized with a strange distemper, which neither my friends nor physicians could comprehend, and it confined me to my chamber for many days; but I knew, myself, that I was bewitched, and suspected my father's reputed concubine of the deed. I told my fears to my reverend protector, who hesitated concerning them, but I knew by his words and looks that he was conscious I was right. I generally conceived myself to be two people. When I lay in bed, I deemed there were two of us in it; when I sat up I always beheld another person, and always in the same position from the place where I sat or stood, which was about three paces off me towards my left side. It mattered not how many or how few were present: this my second self was sure to be present in his place, and this occasioned a confusion in all my words and ideas that utterly astounded my friends, who all declared that, instead of being deranged in my intellect, they had never heard my conversation manifest so much energy or sublimity of conception; but, for all that, over the singular delusion that I was two persons my reasoning faculties had no power. The most perverse part of it was that I rarely conceived *myself* to be any of the two persons. I thought for the most part that my companion was one of them, and my brother the other; and I found that, to be obliged to speak and answer in the character of another man, was a most awkward business in the long run.

In the end Robert accepts the idea of the demonic because, believing in an external moral order, he cannot accept any other explanation. "To be in a state of consciousness and unconsciousness, at the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

same time, in the same body and same spirit, was impossible." Only in very few instances, however, are the events unexplainable in psychological terms.

In the twentieth century the author's intentional use of the *Doppelgänger* is rarely in doubt. The rapid rise of Freudian psychology as a discipline and the gradual decline of the influence of religion as an absolute external sanction have determined the Devil's role in the Double novel. When inner duality is externalized as a Devil, that Devil is clearly a hallucination. After all, the *diabolus ex machina* is too naïve for modern taste; not so the *diabolus ex capite*. Or else realistic characters, by assuming traditional demonic attributes, symbolize the illicit freedom of unconscious processes.

In Mann's *Doctor Faustus* Adrian Leverkühn's bargain with the Devil for twenty-four years of intensely creative life is clearly internal. Moreover, we might prosaically impute that "Devil" to visions consequent on the syphilis to which he exposes himself in order to heighten his genius. But the inhabitants of Adrian's world are themselves plausible manifestations of personal and social diabolism. The subversive teachings of Schleppfuss recall the fallacious logic of Satanic dialectic, which assigns its own qualities to the Divine; the word "freedom" becomes a theological obscenity in his mouth. His name means "dragfoot"—the Devil is usually lame in oral and written accounts; he is red-haired, sports a pointed beard, has pointed teeth, wears a black cloak. There are other characters with demonic attributes: Saul Fitelberg, who wishes Mephistopheleanlike, to bear Adrian "on my mantle through the air and show you the kingdoms of the earth and the glory of them"; or Doctor Zimbalist, the red-headed, criminal physician; or Hetaera Esmeralda, the prostitute from whom Adrian contracts the syphilis which is to nourish his creativity and to destroy his sanity; or the pimp who introduces him to Esmeralda, who reminds him of Schleppfuss and who wears an infernal red cap—all these signify the "soulless instinct" of this Germanic universe. Adrian's dialogues with the Devil are imaginary; however, on the final page, the pedantic narrator, Serenus Zeitblom, Ph.D., sees a stranger at Adrian's grave "a veiled unknown, who disappeared as the final clods fell on the coffin." This ambiguity is, indeed, a mark of the modern novel when it deals witth the dark powers of Western religion.

Moreover, the narrative structure enforces the interpretation that the demonic and the irrational are one. Serenus constantly juxtaposes thematically and technically Adrian's insanity and his

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

country's descent into Naziism, the personal and the national anarchy, the demonic within and the demonic without.

> Germany, the hectic on her cheek, was reeling then at the height of her dissolute triumphs, about to gain the whole world by virtue of the one pact she was minded to keep, which she had signed with her blood. Today, clung round by demons, a hand over one eye, with the other staring into horrors, down she flings from despair to despair. When will she reach the bottom of the abyss? When, out of uttermost hopelessness—a miracle beyond the power of belief—will the light of hope dawn? A lonely man folds his hands and speaks: "God be merciful to thy poor soul, my friend, my Fatherland!"

Adrian Leverkühn evokes our sympathy because of the magnitude of his suffering, because he is unable to love, and because he is presented through the tolerant eyes of a character we like. Though this narrator is pedantic and bourgeois, though he is a foil for Adrian's dynamic demonism, though he is Adrian's alter-ego and complementary Double, Serenus is humane, is finally perceptive, and lives to denounce Naziism. But what are we to make of the constant parallel between Adrian and Germany herself desending into "naked instinct"? A good novel must transcend time and place; but are we—and is the author, himself a German—sufficiently distant from the atrocities of Nazi Germany to accept sympathetically the theme of mental disintegration when it is juxtaposed to the conflict within the German nation. Time may dispel some of the weight of moral judgment for the reader; fortunately it cannot dispel the ambiguity between sympathy and judgment within Mann during the process of creation.

In Flannery O'Connor's *The Violent Bear It Away* some of the same pattern is apparent. The divided self of a boy manifests its loss of identity in a hallucination of the Devil, called the "stranger." But throughout the book realistic characters appear whom the author describes in traditional demonic terms. Authorial and reader sympathy is reserved for a Southern fundamentalist preacher who is clearly insane and for his disciple and grand nephew Tarwater, who is gradually becoming insane. Tarwater's conflict between his uncle's divinely inflicted teaching and the world of temptation is dramatized in the fanciful dialogue between himself and the imaginary "stranger" when the former is trying to bury his dead uncle according to instructions. That the stranger is Tarwater's second self is apparent; the Negro Buford does *not* see him. But the teacher Rayber, who represents a sterile and corrupting rationalism, and the real stranger, the "old-looking young man" in the black suit and lavender

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

shirt who sexually assaults Tarwater after getting him drunk, are both on the Devil's side. While walking with Rayber, while riding with the stranger, Tarwater sees in a store window and in the car window respectively, his Double, his own inner soul which must be saved at all costs.

But *The Violent Bear It Away*, above all, shows the growing complexity in aesthetic and moral ambiguity in the *Doppelgänger* novel. Even when religion is its subject matter, that religion no longer provides a frame of reference by which values may be measured. The modern novelist, although conscious of using the Double motif technically, does not place a moral judgment upon the irrational; or, at least, he reveals a tension between his sympathy for amoral freedom and his judgment of the fictional creatures he has given life. Flannery O'Connor's characters for whom we as readers—and for whom the author herself [13]—care immensely are the two religious fanatics, uncle and nephew. Described as a prophet of old, the uncle is deranged in his obsessive concerns and his inability to live in the real world. Tarwater does in the end become a prophet "in the dark city, where the children of God lay sleeping." Yet the child evangelist whom he sees at the meeting is a freak in whom he recognizes a possible self but at whom he says he wants to spit. He does baptize the idiot child Bishop according to his uncle's demand, but he drowns that child in the process, according to the command of his second self, "the stranger." He does not bury his uncle, nor does he burn the preacher's body, as he at first intended. Symbolically, the man in the lavender shirt steals the hat which his uncle had left him and which represents his sense of identity. Yet that identity is already seriously impaired by divine precepts. He sets the woods on fire in order to escape the manifestations of his madness—the "violet shadow," the "grinning presence." But as he rushes away to save the city and so win his eternal salvation, he is preceded by a "jagged shadow," the threat to his soul. Again, the disintegration of the self is, in effect, a denial of salvation. The reader may be torn between sympathy and judgment but Flannery O'Connor is on the Devil's side without knowing it.

John Knowles has demonstrated in *A Separate Peace* that even novels dealing with preparatory schools can benefit from the *Doppelgänger* technique. Nor does the complex relationship between moral judgment and sympathy in these modern novels diminish because the characters are young or ostensibly free from intense suffering. An imperceptive narrator, Gene, becomes aware of the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

principle of anarchy when he meets his bodily Double Phineas at school. Finny breaks the rules, lives in a child's world of daring and invention, says what he thinks, possesses a primitive energy which at once attracts and repels. But, although this relationship causes Gene to commit an irrational act in which he cripples Finny, he refuses to admit that he himself is capable of such disorder. When his friend Leper, whose instability finally leads to madness and to truth, states: " 'You always were a savage underneath,' " he rushes away in anger. Indeed, he destroys Phineas by destroying his will to live—still neglecting his responsibility for his deed. Phineas is presented as "the good bad boy" in the sentimental American tradition. What redeems him and convinces his teachers that he is a model boy is his love of his school and the fact that he has the "right" instincts. No Satanic hate deforms him. But what are we to think of Gene, who is not evil in any objective sense, merely incredibly imperceptive and callous. When he says,

> I never killed anybody and I never developed an intense level of hatred for the enemy. Because my war ended before I ever put on a uniform; I was on active duty all my time at school; I killed my enemy there.

who are we as readers to regard as the enemy? Phineas, his second self, whose being finally fills Gene, is a free self but not a criminal self. If Phineas is the "enemy," then Gene's final statement is his moment of revelation, his recognition that the instinctual and free is not to be crippled or killed but made to coexist, to balance in a new unity.

> All of them, all except Phineas, constructed at infinite cost to themselves these Maginot Lines against this enemy they thought they saw across the frontier, this enemy who never attacked that way—if he ever attacked at all; if he was indeed the enemy.

Ironically, Gene thinks he has killed the enemy, has destroyed that irrational externalized by Finny. And even in this moment of truth, he subconsciously still denies that "they" are the same as "he."

William Faulkner's *Sartoris* and *Go Down Moses* both explore the idea of the psychic unity of twins and, therefore, reveal Faulkner's fascination with bodily Doubles. Young Bayard Sartoris consciously yields to his self-destructive tendencies after the death of his twin John in the First World War. This is the modern ironic reversal of the primitive social tradition in which the founding of cultures demanded the positive sacrifice of one twin.[14] John's death in the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

war is a parody of that ritual sacrifice, and is symptomatic both of Bayard's internal disorder and of the decay of the South and of modern mechanized society.

In *Absalom, Absalom!* Faulkner's awareness of the *Doppelgänger* as a motif for exploiting personal and social disintegration and loss of identity combine with his emphasis upon formal ingenuity. Here the complexity of the psychological Double affects the story of Thomas Sutpen, whose dominant nature seems to change according to which observer reveals his "truth" more than fifty years later to Quentin Compson. Amid constant chronological violation in the narrative, three observers tell the same story to Quentin; each provides a different picture of the same man in a fictional technique which approximates the incremental repetition of the ballad. To Miss Rosa, Sutpen's essential quality is his demonism; to Quentin's grandfather it is his innocence. Sutpen's refusal to allow Charles Bon, his illegitimate son, to marry Judith, his daughter, is attributed first to fear of bigamy; then, to fear of incest; then, to fear of miscegenation. Sutpen's own dual nature is externalized in shifting relationships among his children; for the child is man's attempt to duplicate himself and, hence, insure his immortality. Judith and her brother Henry are described as a composite. Charles fascinates both in turn because "of that relationship between them—that single personality with two bodies both of which had been seduced almost simultaneously by a man whom at the time Judith had never seen. . . ." But Henry's allegiance to Bon is also a repressed incestuous desire for the sister with whom he would like to unite sexually as well as psychically, and with whom Bon would, indeed, be committing incest.

> . . . So it must have been Henry who seduced Judith, not Bon: seduced her along with himself from that distance between Oxford and Sutpen's Hundred, between herself and the man whom she had not even seen yet, as though by means of that telepathy with which as children they seemed at times to anticipate one another's actions as two birds leave a limb at the same instant; that rapport not like the conventional delusion of that between twins but rather such as might exist between two people who, regardless of sex or age or heritage of race or tongue, had been marooned at birth on a desert island: the island here Sutpen's Hundred. . . .

Ultimately Faulkner's insistence upon Bon's almost womanly "elegance," his conversion into the "woman, the loved, the bride," while it does affect our sympathy for him adversely, functions to exploit the fascination which ungoverned yearnings have for Henry. In killing Bon, Henry buries back in his childhood all the anti-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

social tendencies which Bon's effeminate presence inspires. Again, Quentin, who himself commits incest in desire though not in fact; and Shreve, his Harvard roommate, with whom he is brooding over Sutpen's story—South and North—project themselves into the past and into the figures of Henry and Charles: "Charles-Shreve and Quentin-Henry." Shreve becomes so obsessed by Bon that he attempts to guess the latter's thoughts while he waits for Sutpen's paternal acknowledgment, while he consents to the final ride which he knows will end in fratricide. The fateful ride before Charles's death is for both Quentin and Shreve a descent into the self, the "night journey" without which there is neither understanding nor wholeness.

Not only does Charles Bon synthesize the feminine and the masculine but also the light and dark, good and evil, within his being; he reunites his father's demonism and his father's innocence. In not admitting his paternity, Sutpen continues to believe he can establish his design upon wholly rational and conscious foundations, that his obsession can fasten upon the ideal alone without the balance which the irrational furnishes. In not admitting his paternity, he ironically thwarts his own role as the father of a dynasty and of a culture. Finally in not admitting his paternity, Sutpen denies not only Charles's identity, but his own as well.

In its dramatization of a constant threat to our identity and our internal selves, the modern *Doppelgänger* novel reveals an ambiguity in authorial and reader sympathy and judgment, a failure to assign negative value to the socially undesirable. Paradoxically, an author's growing sympathy for anarchy and illicit freedom has led him to a new emphasis upon technique—as if this yearning for the abyss requires the restraint of intricate form. Denied an absolute external order, aware of enormous internal oppositions, he seems forced to create that order in an extreme concern for structure and style.

All the characteristics of the modern Double novel converge in *Pale Fire* by Vladimir Nabokov. A pedantic academician, Charles Kinbote, edits the manuscript of a neighbor and poet who is accidentally shot and killed. John Shade's name alone assigns him his major role in his relationship to Kinbote: he is a second or shadow self. Like Adrian Leverkühn and Serenus Zeitblom in *Doctor Faustus*, Shade and Kinbote are foils, the two sides of a single personality. Formally, the book is divided into two parts—the Foreword, Notes, and Index of the scholar; and the Four Cantos (minus one

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

line) of the poet's contemplative, almost Wordsworthian spiritual autobiography in verse. The scholar constantly imposes his presence upon the poet in order to tell him the account of the exiled king of Zembla. He hopes to inspire Shade to write the national epic of this land. The Notes, which alternate between the everyday details of Wordsmith College in New Wye, where Kinbote teaches and Shade is poet in residence, and the political unrest in Zembla, finally reveal that Kinbote is the exiled king, Charles the Beloved. Kinbote insists that the bullet of the assassin which killed Shade was meant for him, since his enemies at home have penetrated his disguise.

But narrative events imply that Kinbote himself is mad, that the kingdom of Zembla is an imaginary realm to which he wishes Shade to give artistic life; and Gradus, the Assassin, is but an escapee from a mental institution who shoots Shade by chance. With Shade's death Kinbote loses at once his *raison d'être* and any hope of eventual recovery. This *Doppelgänger* novel, then—and Nabokov is sufficiently thoughtful to use the word "doubleganger" once in the text—explores both the disintegrating personality and the problem of identity. Not only can we not trust Kinbote, but Shade proves to be a drunkard. One deleted line of Shade's poem quotes Alexander Pope: "'. . . The sot a hero, lunatic a king.'" Given the madness of one and the weakness and name of the other, we cannot determine which man represents the disintegration within. Even the real artist is in doubt, for Kinbote's artistic achievement in giving life to his fictional world of pedantic Notes far exceeds that of Shade in his competent but pedestrian poem.

Nor does Nabokov spare his readers a new use of the stylistic and technical devices of the traditional Double novel. The imaginary king's escape from Zembla is facilitated, he claims, by numerous subjects who adopt his disguise of a red cap and red sweater—a parody of demonic dress. His incessant concern with Shade's life often appears as mere voyeurism; he is constantly peering into Shade's window and speculating upon the poet's sexual prowess. (Perhaps this may establish a new motif—the Double as Voyeur.) Mirrors and windows, water used to reflect, "crystal lakes"—all these are multiplied infinitely so that the reader cannot mistake Nabokov's intention.[15]

The reader may question if any real tension exists between our sympathy and our judgment as readers. Any threat to the unconscious which we may feel the personality of Kinbote exercises over us is dispelled by the ingenuity of the technique. The novel arouses

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

both our very real admiration and our equally real laughter, but only occasionally our sympathy. Perhaps the threat *is* there, but what dissipates it and deceives us is that we do laugh.

In the twentieth century *Doppelgänger* novel there can no longer be any question of whether the author realizes that he is exploiting the conflict between the conscious and the unconscious life, the constant menace of personal disintegration which apparently threatens us all and the loss of identity consequent both upon mental disorder and the necessity that the character mask his internal life by creating roles to play. The dream of reconciliation between conflicting selves is but a dream after all. What the novelist does to compensate for his and his reader's loss of the primitive's secure belief based on a religious world-view is to find order in artistry and form, an order which is imposed from without rather than inherent in his material. Moreover, to save his individuality, he relies not upon the primitive's belief in an immortal self; rather, he creates that immortality in a work which is a mirror of his soul-mind, a "mutual daydream." [16] The author's vision of life is his public confession that he is both criminal and prosecutor, and that we, as second selves, unconsciously share his guilt.

References

1. Otto Rank, "The Double as Immortal Self," *Beyond Psychology*. New York: Dover Publications, 1958, 63. See also "Der Doppelgänger," *Imago*, III (1914).
2. Otto Rank, "Religion and Belief in the Soul," *Psychology and The Soul*, trans. by William D. Turner. New York: A. S. Barnes and Company, Inc., 1961, 14.
3. Rank, "The Double as Immortal Self," *Beyond Psychology*, 74.
4. *Ibid.*, 66.
5. André Gide, *Dostoevsky*, intro. by Albert J. Guerard. Norfolk, Conn: New Directions, 1961, 168.
6. No quotations from individual novels will be footnoted.
7. Henry A. Murray, "Introduction," *Pierre*, by Herman Melville. New York: Hendricks House, 1949, liii.
8. Albert J. Guerard, "Introduction," *Heart of Darkness* and *The Secret Sharer*, by Joseph Conrad. New York: The American Library, 1961, 9.
9. *Loc. cit.*
10. See Otto Rank, *The Myth of the Birth of the Hero* for an account of the various stages of the hero's quest as well as its psychological origins. For the theory relating the meaning of the archetypal night journey to the integration of the personality see C. J. Jung, *The Archetypes and the Collec-*

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tive Unconscious, trans. by R. F. C. Hull, New York: Pantheon Books Inc., 1959.
11. Sigmund Freud, "Neurosis of Demoniacal Possession," *Collected Papers*, authorized trans. under supervision of Joan Riviere, New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1959, IV, 450-451.
12. Rank, "The Double as Immortal Self," *Beyond Psychology*, 76.
13. John Hawkes, "Flannery O'Connor's Devil," *The Sewanee Review*, LXX, (Summer 1962), 3.
14. Rank, "The Double as Immortal Self," *Beyond Psychology*, 92.
15. For an extended analysis of the Doubles in *Pale Fire*, see Mary McCarthy, "A Bolt from the Blue," *The New Republic* (June 4, 1962).
16. Hans Sachs, "The Community of Daydreams," *The Creative Unconscious*, ed. by A. A. Roback. Cambridge, Mass.: Sci-Art Publishers, 1951, 31.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LAWRENCE KOHLBERG

Psychological Analysis and Literary Form: A Study of the Doubles in Dostoevsky

Psychology is a knife that cuts both ways.
—The Brothers Karamazov
Illness, delirium, amnesia, but why were you haunted by just those delusions and not by any others?
—Crime and Punishment

To THE PSYCHOLOGIST looking at contemporary literature, there is a rather paradoxical discrepancy between the impact of psychoanalysis upon creative and upon critical writing. While it is almost impossible to find a serious modern novel or drama which would not be profoundly different without the existence of psychoanalytic concepts, this can hardly be said for modern literary criticism.

A major factor in the impact of psychoanalytic ideas upon creative writing is the ability of psychoanalysis to breathe new life into old myths and literary forms. This invigorating effect springs in large part from the psychoanalytic balance of concern for inward forces and outward action, each revealing something otherwise mysterious about the person. In contrast, the introspectionism of the Jamesian psychological novel leads to an essential meaninglessness of action, while the Hemingway or "new wave" behaviorism is a complete denial of the meaning of the internal.

The revivifying effect of psychoanalysis upon old literary forms is most clearly apparent in tragedy, which the Freudian world-view makes meaningful for a scientifically oriented and morally relativistic culture. Faithful to necessities apparent in its early Athenian form,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tragedy requires a crime to be committed which is both willed and unwilled; both free and foreordained, a fated act for which the actor is yet responsible. As tragic crime is foreordained but willed, so tragic punishment is both doom and self-discovery of evil. In Athenian tragedy, the fated aspects of crime and punishment were the result of cruel but moral external forces. In the modern "psychoanalytic" form of tragedy, the fated aspects of crime and punishment are the products of uncontrolled and unconscious internal forces. The crime is the fated result of immutable instinctual impulses; the inevitable doom which follows the crime is the result of unconscious and inescapable needs for punishment. Other "scientific" world-views, such as the sociological determinism embodied in Dreiser's *American Tragedy*, provide a sense of the inevitability of crime and punishment. This inevitability, however, is the product of purely external and amoral forces, and cannot be combined with the willed self-discovery and repentance characteristic of classic tragedy.

In contrast with its revolutionary impact upon creative writing, psychoanalysis seems of only minor importance to modern literary criticism. The common awareness of psychological sickness and symbol in a literary work is believed to detract, rather than add to, understanding and appreciation of the work. Critics who feel that this awareness can be used constructively, such as Burke, Guerard, Hyman, Kazin, Trilling, and Wilson use psychoanalysis primarily as myth, as one element or world-view among many which sensitize the reader of a work of art to its meaning. The construction and "proof" of a detailed psychoanalytic interpretation seems out of place in such literary criticism.

Critical articles in the professional psychiatric journals present a striking contrast. In these, the literary meaning of the work of art is not considered as central to the analytic task. In contrast with the critical use of psychoanalysis as sensitizing "myth," the professional psychoanalyst attempts to use psychoanalytic theory to provide a comprehensive and true explanation of why a given writer wrote just what he did. He brings to literature the habits of the clinic which require that a decision or diagnosis be made, and the habits of a scientist which require that a hypothesis be judged, not as inspiring, but as true or false.

Of all writers, none has elicited more of this case-study approach than Dostoevsky, that archetype of the psychopathological genius. Some of these studies, diagnosing Dostoevsky on the basis of biographical data, as if he were a case to be committed to a hospital or

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a course of therapy, have come to such conclusions as, "Dostoevsky was an epileptic, schizophrene, paranoid type, complicated by hysterical overlay."[1] Other studies focus upon Dostoevsky's unconscious conflicts as projected into his novels. The classic example of this type of study is Freud's essay on Dostoevsky,[2] in which he views Dostoevsky as preoccupied by parricidal impulses and resultant guilt, a conflict projected into Dmitri and Ivan Karamazov. Still other studies focus upon the analysis of a specific character in a novel as if he were a real person, coming to such conclusions as that "Raskolnikov was an autistic personality with traces of the manic depressive"[3] or that "Raskolnikov's murder was a result of efforts to appease unconscious guilt due to an incestuous attachment to his sister."[4]

Both academic psychologist and humanist question this sort of study. In the first place, it is impossible to know whether these interpretations are true. The characters are not real people, the biographical data on the author is inadequate, and a novel is not a psychological projective-test response by an author. Even if the case data were adequate, one could not achieve scientific certainty in the interpretation of a single case. Few would disagree with Kris[5] that "It would seem as well demonstrated as any conclusion in the social sciences that the struggle against incestuous impulses, dependency, guilt, and aggression has remained a recurrent topic of Western literature from Sophocles to Proust." The ubiquity of certain themes in myth and literature, though undeniable, does not, however, contribute to certainty of interpretation of any individual case.

The second reservation is an even more crucial one. What difference does it make to the intelligent reader's understanding of a novel to know that Dostoevsky had parricidal impulses or was an epileptic schizophrene? Even Freud seems to agree with this caveat, since he begins his essay on Dostoevsky as follows:

> Four facets may be distinguished in the rich personality of Dostoevsky —the creative artist, the neurotic, the moralist and the sinner. How is one to find one's way in this bewildering complexity? The creative artist is least doubtful. *The Brothers Karamazov* is the most magnificent novel ever written. . . . Before the problem of the creative artist, analysis must, alas, lay down its arms.

Freud would feel that his analysis of Dostoevsky helps explain the power of Dostoevsky's novel in that "It can scarcely be owing to chance that three of the masterpieces of all literature *Oedipus Rex*, *Hamlet*, and *The Brothers Karamazov* should all deal with the same

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

subject, parricide." In Freud's view, "parricide is the principal and primal crime of humanity as well as of the individual, and the main source of the sense of guilt"; and in some sense the power of *The Brothers Karamazov* lies in its confrontation of the reader with his own guilt-laden impulses in a situation in which identification with the hero is at a sufficient distance to allow "catharsis through pity and fear." Even if one granted this interpretation, it hardly explains the difference between murder in Dostoevsky and murder in Mickey Spillane.

The present paper is an effort to show that psychoanalysis need not entirely "lay down its arms" before Dostoevsky, the creative artist; it will use a psychological analysis to clarify two literary problems important in the appreciation and understanding of Dostoevsky's novels: the first, his use of Doubles; the second, his particular and unique moral ideology.

In recent years, literary critics have come to believe that an understanding of Dostoevsky's use of Doubles is the key to an understanding of the structure of his novels, a key which radically revises early critical views of Dostoevsky's novels as "badly constructed and unwieldly." An example of such a recent structural or "technique" interpretation of the Doubles is Beebe's analysis of *Crime and Punishment:*

> If we approach *Crime and Punishment* with a knowledge of Dostoevsky's character and method of writing, we are likely to be surprised at the disciplined skill the structure of the novel reveals. It meets the test of unity in action; all the parts contribute to the whole and the parts may be fully understood only when the whole is known. One of the ways in which Dostoevsky unified his novel is through his technique of "doubles." The dual nature of his heroes is, of course, a commonplace of criticism. Because his protagonists are usually split personalities, the psychological and philosophical drama in a Dostoevsky novel is expressed in terms of a conflict between opposite poles of sensibility and intelligence, self-sacrifice and self-assertion, God-Man and Man-God, or sometimes "good" and "bad." To dramatize this conflict, Dostoevsky often gives his characters several alter-egos or doubles, each projecting one of the extremes of the split personality. Even when the hero is not present in the scene, he may represent the center of interest because the characters present, represent different facets of his personality. According to most interpretations of *Crime and Punishment,* the struggle within Raskolnikov becomes physical external action as he wavers between Svidrigailov, epitome of self-willed evil, and Sonia, epitome of self-sacrifice and spiritual goodness.*

* J. M. Beebe, "The Three Motives of Raskolnikov," in E. Wasiolek (editor), *Crime and Punishment and the Critics* (San Francisco: Wadeworth, 1961).

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Dostoevsky's Doubles, however, are not mere portrayals of ties between stereotyped representatives of good and evil to be found throughout good and bad fiction. They obviously contain much personal symbolic meaning and are intended to have a psychopathological basis. They not only express ideological values and requirements of plot but enact or express murders of kin, rapes of little girls, spider fantasies, mutilation themes, epileptic attacks, suicide, necrophilia and hallucinations, and were viewed by Dostoevsky himself as forms of psychopathology. The *Raw Youth* says: "What then precisely is the 'double'? The 'double,' at any rate according to a medical work by an expert which I read for the purpose is nothing but the first stage in some serious mental derangement which may lead to a bad conclusion, a dualism between feeling and willing."

Not only does Dostoevsky view his Doubles as "psychopathological," but his preoccupation with Doubles precedes the ideological and structural use he was to make of them in his later novels. This preoccupation on a purely psychological level is expressed in Dostoevsky's second novel, written before his Siberian exile and entitled *The Double,* a novel which he said "contained a great deal of myself."

The hero of this novel, Golyadkin, is one of Dostoevsky's typical, socially isolated petty officials desperately striving to maintain some appearance of respectability in spite of poverty, social incompetence, and deep feelings of inferiority. He awakes in a clouded state, on the verge of a breakdown, believing that something is being got up against him by his colleagues at the office, that there is a conspiracy afloat, that his reputation has been blackened and that his enemies are trying to ruin him.

After consulting his doctor he decides to attend a ball that evening given by his former patron ("who has been a father to him") in honor of his daughter. Golyadkin has not been invited and is under a cloud because of some unspecified recent behavior. He is refused admission by the footman, but enters the house surreptitiously and lurks in the corridor. Suddenly in contradiction to his usual self-effacement, some mysterious brazen impulse "projects" him into the ballroom and leads him to insist on dancing with the daughter. He is ignominiously thrown out on the street.

He then wanders about the streets and contemplates suicide by drowning. He has an uncanny feeling that there is someone near, and in terror recognizes the presence of a Double, a figure exactly like himself, who accompanies him home.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The next day, he finds the Double ensconced at a desk at his office, as if he had always worked there, ingratiating himself with his colleagues and superiors, and ridiculing Golyadkin. All of this Golyadkin II's misconduct is blamed on Golyadkin I, while Golyadkin II gets credit for all of Golyadkin I's efforts. Golyadkin views the Double as an indecent, shameless, malevolent toady but nevertheless attempts to be friendly with him and is insulted and humiliated for his pains.

After agonies of humiliation, rage, fear, and suspicion, Golyadkin believes a solution awaits him. He believes he has received a note from the daughter of his patron asking him to elope with her and arranging a rendezvous. He awaits her at the appointed time in hiding outside her house, just as he had in the episode preceding the emergence of the Double. His Double trots out and hustles him into the house where a crowd is gathered, staring at him. He is suddenly surrounded by an "infinite procession of Golyadkins noisily bursting in at every door of the room." He is carried away to the lunatic asylum by his own cruel doctor while the Double hangs on to the carriage door and pokes his head in the window.

In this tale, Dostoevsky's use of the Double theme of Hoffman and Gogol does not achieve any grand artistic purpose, but it does offer a compelling picture of psychopathology. Accordingly, we shall attempt to settle the purely diagnostic questions about the Double phenomena it presents before considering the literary meanings of the Double themes.

The only serious treatment of *The Double* from a psychopathological view is provided in a monograph written in the early twenties by Otto Rank, Freud's "most gifted follower."[6] Rank proclaims the novel to be a classic portrayal of a paranoid state. There are indeed strong resemblances between the phenomena presented in *The Double* and familiar psychiatric phenomena of paranoid states. Paranoid delusions or hallucinations of persecutory figures emerge from feelings of shame and pathologically low self-esteem. These delusions are presumed to be the result of the defence mechanism of "disowning projection." Shameful impulses and tendencies toward self-accusation are denied as belonging to the self and are projected upon external imagined enemies. Obviously Dostoevsky intended Golyadkin II to be a hallucination representing the assertive, shameless impulses which first "propelled" Golyadkin I into his patron's ballroom, since the novel ends with the double propelling him again into the same ballroom. Golyadkin I's sense of

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

low esteem, his feeling that he is being intrigued against, his life in a world in which he makes and receives veiled threats and innuendoes, are indeed striking portrayals of the paranoid attitude.

It also seems likely that *The Double* may have expressed one of Dostoevsky's states at the time of the writing of the novel, a state of feeling humiliated and "persecuted" in connection with the outbreak of previously unsuspected or unacknowledged qualities in his own personality. Just previous to writing *The Double*, the success of *Poor Folk* had completely turned his head and transformed him from a shy, sensitive, aloof romantic to someone capable of writing such statements as the following to his brother:

> Well brother, I believe my fame is just now in its fullest flower. Everybody looks on me as a wonder of the world. If I but open my mouth the air resounds with what Dostoevsky said, what Dostoevsky means to do. . . . Bielinky declares Turgenev has quite lost his heart to me. . . . All the Minnas, Claras, Mariannas, etc., have got amazingly pretty, but cost a lot of money.[7]

The reaction of his acquaintances to this sort of bombast was to nickname Dostoevsky "the literary pimple." Indeed, *The Double* commences with Golyadkin saying: "A fine thing if something untoward had happened today and a strange pimple had come up." Presumably his double was the "literary pimple" which erupted that day from within Golyadkin's personality.

In spite of these considerations, *The Double* is not the portrayal of a genuine psychiatric phenomenon of paranoia, as Dostoevsky himself may have believed. While the feelings of persecution and the disowning of part of the self portrayed in *The Double* have psychiatric parallels in paranoid states, the experience of a hallucinatory duplicate of the self is not explained by, or consistent with, a paranoid psychosis. The typical paranoid concept is one of a spotless self being unjustly blamed and tortured by evil others. In contrast, Dostoevsky's hallucinatory or semi-hallucinatory Doubles persecute their creators by asserting their identity with them, and usually their creators are aware that the Double is their "other self." Stavrogin says of his hallucinations (in the suppressed chapter of *The Possessed*):

> It shows different faces and characters yet it is always the same. I know it is different aspects of myself splitting themselves off yet it wants to be an independent devil so an independent devil it must be.

Such self-awareness is quite alien to the paranoid state. If the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

paranoid persecutors were to be experienced as duplicates of the self, the defensive function of the hallucinations would break down, since they would no longer protect the self against the awareness that it is the possessor of shameful impulses.

Another "popular-psychiatry" concept often used by literary critics, the "split personality," is equally inadequate as an accurate interpretation of the Double phenomenon. This concept is suggested by Versilov in *The Raw Youth* who says:

> I am really split in two mentally, and I am horribly afraid of it. It is just as though one's *second self* were standing beside one; one is sensible and rational oneself, but the other self is compelled to do something perfectly senseless and sometimes very funny; and suddenly you notice you are longing to do that amusing thing, goodness knows why. I once knew a doctor who suddenly began whistling in church, at his father's funeral.

These divided selves of Dostoevsky do not, however, correspond to psychiatric notions of the "split personality." The most common psychiatric conception of the "split personality" refers to the hysterical phenomenon of multiple personalities, the *Three Faces of Eve;* each living a Jekyll and Hyde existence in independence of one another. Unlike such multiple personalities, the "selves" within any of Dostoevsky's figures are simultaneously aware of one another. These "split selves" have equally little to do with schizophrenia, in the sense in which this has been misleadingly mistranslated as "split personality."

Dostoevsky's consciously "split" characters do present classical symptoms of the obsessive-compulsive character, however. The "split" is not a separation of selves, it is an obsessive balancing or undoing of one idea or force with its opposite. Most characteristically, a sacred idea compulsively arouses a degrading idea; the sacredness of the father's funeral compels the impulse to whistle. The hero of *Notes from Underground* says, "At the very moment when I am most capable of feeling every refinement of all that is good and beautiful it would, as though by design, happen to me not only to feel, but to do, such ugly things."

Not only impulse and counter-impulse, but belief and disbelief are opposed and simultaneously felt in a compulsion neurosis. According to Ivan's devil, "Some can contemplate such depths of belief and disbelief at the same moment that sometimes it really seems as if they are within a hairbreadth of being turned upside down."

Psychoanalysts view these obsessional oppositions as representing conflicts derived from a battle of wills in early childhood, center-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ing around training conflicts. According to Erikson's *Childhood and Society,* this conflict is between autonomy and shame or doubt. Shame, Erikson says, "is an emotion insufficiently studied because in our culture it is so early and easily absorbed by guilt. Shame supposes that one is completely exposed and conscious of being looked at, i.e. self-conscious. It is essentially rage turned against the self."

The "Underground" man tells us:

> With an intense acute pang I was stabbed to the heart by the thought that ten years, twenty years, forty years would pass and even in forty years I would remember with loathing and humiliation those filthiest, most ludicrous, and awful moments of my life. No one could have gone out of his way to degrade himself more shamelessly, and I fully realized it, fully, and yet I went on.

In the self-abasers, feelings of shame are responded to by further self-abasement, since such self-lowering debases and denies the others before whom shame is felt. Fyodor Karamazov says, "I feel when I meet people that I am lower than all and that they all take me for a buffoon, so I say let me play the buffoon for you are, every one of you, lower than I."

The psychoanalytic notion of the obsessional character focused on a conflict between autonomy and shame helps us understand a very puzzling aspect of the literary structure of *Notes from Underground.* The book is composed of two quite different parts: the first an ideological discussion, the second a presentation of some excursions in self-degradation. The ideological portion is an assertion of the need for free will, rational or irrational, against the rational determinism of Western scientific thought. The other half of the work is the expression of the "shame-humiliation syndrome." Some unity in these two parts of the book is provided by the emotional congruity of a personality type in whom the desperate need for freedom from domination or control is linked to the cycle of shame and denial of others.

This analysis of Dostoevsky's "split personalities" as related to obsessional ambivalence and shame does not directly aid us in understanding his Doubles. There is, however, a very direct psychiatric parallel to the kind of hallucination described in *The Double.* This parallel is the "autoscopic syndrome," a syndrome with no relationship to paranoid states. A typical case is that of Mrs. A:

> Mrs. A returned home from her husband's funeral and when she opened the door to her bedroom, she immediately became aware of the presence of somebody else in the room. In the twilight she noticed a lady

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in front of her. Under the light she noticed that the stranger wore an exact replica of her own coat, hat, and veil. Mrs. A was neither surprised nor afraid and began to undress. The lady in black did exactly the same. Only then looking into the stranger's face, did Mrs. A become aware that it was she herself, as if in a mirror, that it was her 'double,' her 'second self' looking at her. She felt it was more alive and warm than she was herself. Feeling tired and weary, she lay down on her bed. As soon as she closed her eyes, the apparition disappeared. She felt stronger and when she opened her eyes, the apparition was not visible. Since that evening she had been visited almost daily by her 'astral body,' as she called it, mostly at dusk when she was alone. Of the double she says, 'In a detached intellectual way I am fully aware that my double is only a hallucination. Yet I see it; I hear it; I feel it with my senses. Emotionally I feel it as a living part of myself. It is me split and divided. It is all so confusing.'[8]

Almost everything Mrs. A says is echoed by one or another of Dostoevsky's Double-haunted figures. The physical details of the appearance of Dostoevsky's hallucinatory Double are very close to those described by autoscopic patients. Ivan's satanic Double has frozen in his trip through space, and is underdressed in summer clothes, though it is winter; autoscopic Doubles are typically cold, often described as bringing "a breeze of cold air." As in autoscopic experiences, Dostoevsky's Doubles appear at dusk or night, typically when the subject is alone in his bedroom. Like them, Dostoevsky's Doubles tend to be colorless, to be described in shades of grey.

Surprisingly, the likelihood of Dostoevsky's having experienced the autoscopic syndrome has not been mentioned in the extensive psychological literature on Dostoevsky. Nevertheless, there is good reason to believe that he actually had these experiences. While the autoscopic syndrome is rare, it is often linked with severe epilepsy of the sort known to have affected Dostoevsky. The syndrome is extremely puzzling since it is found associated with a variety of conditions, usually organic (epilepsy, parietal brain damage, and severe migraine) but occasionally purely emotional (schizoid personality, depressions).

There is reason to believe that an unusual number of writers have experienced autoscopic hallucinations. Maupassant definitely had hallucinations of a duplicate self in the middle stages of his syphilitic or paretic psychosis,[9] hallucinations quite faithfully described in *Le Horla*. Some writers without organic pathology definitely experienced the autoscopic syndrome, including Hoffman, de Musset, Richter and probably Poe.[10] The phenomenon represents a projection of the body-image into space, or a loss of bodily coordinates of the body image. The variations in reported emotional re-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

actions to autoscopic hallucinations are striking: sometimes satisfaction, sometimes sadness, sometimes dread, sometimes indifference. There does not seem to be a single emotional meaning or genesis common to all cases of the autoscopic syndrome. While the psychiatric label provides a basis for understanding Dostoevsky's preoccupation with Doubles, it does not seem to specify their meaning to him or to his novels.

To cast further light on this problem, we must consider the variety of Doubles in Dostoevsky's other novels. We may best begin with some findings from a statistical study of Dostoevsky's characters. Our study made use of a method called "Q technique,"[11] designed to bring some objectivity of inference into the analysis of the single case. Both Dostoevsky and his characters were rated on a large number of traits, both psychoanalytic and ideological. The results were factor analyzed to define types of character in relation to Dostoevsky's own personality.

Undoubtedly this effort to control statistically the psychology which "cuts both ways" would cause its subject to repeat in anguish the famous statement in *Notes from Underground* about "life in the Crystal Palace":

> All human actions will then be tabulated according to these laws, mathematically, like tables of logarithms. But man still is man and not the key of a piano and even if it were proved to him by science and mathematics that he were nothing but a piano key, even then he would not become reasonable but would purposely do something perverse simply to gain his point; if necessary, he will contrive destruction and chaos and sufferings and launch a curse upon the world. If you say all this, too, can be calculated and tabulated—chaos, darkness, and curses, so that the mere possibility of calculating it all beforehand would stop it all, and mathematical reason would reassert itself—then man would purposely go mad in order to be rid of reason and gain his point!

The "chaos, darkness, suffering and curses" of Dostoevsky's characters proved quite amenable to tabulation and defined very stable, clearcut types in the factor analysis. These types were the same (*i.e.*, characters were divided into the same groups) whether psychoanalytic or ideological traits were used as the basis for type formation.[12]

The types which resulted are not likely to make the conventional literary critic "defy mathematical reason," since they are not very different from those familiar in the Dostoevsky criticism. These types are defined by the entries in Table 1. As one reads down the table for a given type, the presence of a number indicates that this

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

TABLE 1
Six Character-Type Factors Defined by the Loading of 34 Characters Upon Them

Characters:	Types:					
	I Bad Doubles	II Christ Figures	III Self-Abasers	IV Fem-inines	V Will Mur-derers	VI Impul-sives
1. Dostoevsky himself			43	28		31
Brothers Karamazov:						
2. Fyodor (father)	70					
3. Dmitri						58
4. Ivan					51	
5. Alyosha		81				
6. Smerdyakov	40					
7. Grushenka				63		35
8. Katerina I.				70		
9. Snegirov			74			
10. Zossima (monk)		73				
11. The Devil	74					
The Idiot:						
12. Myshkin		76				
13. Rogozhin						65
14. Aglaia				72		
15. Ippolit			54		45	
16. Nastasya						45
Underground Notes:						
17. Narrator			45			
The Possessed:						
18. Stavrogin	41				55	
19. Pyotr V.	58					
20. Kirrilov		59			46	
21. Shatov		71				
22. Lisa D.		46		45		
23. Stepan V. (father of P.)			64			
The Double:						
24. Golyadkin I			69		19	
25. Golyadkin II	71					
Crime and Punishment:						
26. Katerina Marm.			52	51		
27. Svidrigailov	61					
28. Sonia		63				
29. Dounia (sister)		40		45		
30. Raskolnikov					54	
31. Marmeladov			75			
Psychiatric Types:						
32. Paranoid					40	
33. Hysteric			53	30		
34. Psychopath	69					

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

character is a representative of that type. The size of the number is an index of the "goodness" or purity of the character as a representative of the given type.

The types defined in Table 1 are useful in sketching out the meaning of Dostoevsky's Doubles. The most unique of Dostoevsky's Doubles are hallucinations (Golyadkin II in *The Double* and the devils in *The Possessed* and *The Brothers Karamazov*). These hallucinations persecute their flesh and blood counterparts by insisting on the fundamental identity of the two. These hallucinatory Doubles are all our Type I "bad Doubles," and they are imagined by our Type V "will murderers." Raters assigned high scores to Type I characters on the traits: "A mysterious and sinister affinity to another character," "Is a Double who is an intellectual inferior, a caricature of his alter-ego," "Is a persecuting Double." Type V characters tended to be rated high on the complementary traits, e.g., "Is persecuted by a Double."

A second type of Double is defined by the figures of Smerdyakov in *The Brothers Karamazov* and Pyotr Verkhovensky in *The Possessed*. These flesh and blood characters were distinct from the hallucinatory Doubles on the psychoanalytic traits but not the ideological. They are "psychopathic" figures who carry out murders wished for by the "paranoids" Ivan and Stavrogin, and are mysterious "half-brothers" to them.

Still a third type of Double is represented by the Christ-figures of our Type II. These Christ-figures, with the exception of Sonia in *Crime and Punishment*, have alter-egos among our Type VI impulsives. These relations, like those last mentioned, are described in a terminology of "brother" and "sister," real or spiritual. Prince Myshkin has a mysterious affinity to Rogozhin and to Nastasya in *The Idiot*, both an attraction and a feeling of a linkage of fate. Alyosha Karamazov is, in a somewhat similar sense, an alter-ego to his brother Dmitri who enacts sexual and aggressive impulses which Alyosha somehow shares. Dmitri tells him:

> I want to tell you now about the insects to whom God gave sensual lust. I am that insect, brother, and all we Karamazovs are such insects, and, angel as you are, that insect lives in you, too, and will stir up a tempest in your blood.

Like Myshkin, Alyosha knows his impulsive Double will attempt murder, dreads it, but is strangely paralyzed or passive about preventing it. In some sense, Type VI, the impulsives, seem to represent or enact the impulses of Type II, the Christ-figures, just as

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Type I figures enact the impulses of Type V, the "paranoid" will-murderers. The relationship between Types I and V is explicit and consciously intended by Dostoevsky, while the relationship between Type II and VI is much more cloudy and undefined.

Our statistically derived map shows many clear-cut and recurring aspects to Dostoevsky's Doubles. These are not the result of the requirements of structure of a particular book since they are repeated from novel to novel. They are also not explained, however, by mere knowledge that Dostoevsky may have experienced the autoscopic phenomenon. The autoscopic Doubles are assigned a definite evil personality constant from book to book and are in some mysterious way part of a world including good-and-evil, flesh-and-blood alter-egos.

To enrich our notion of the meaning of these facts in relation to the autoscopic syndrome, we may turn to Otto Rank's discussion of "The Double as Immortal Self" in his last book, *Beyond Psychology*. No better example of the fact that "psychology is a knife which cuts both ways" can be provided than Rank's two writings on the Double. His first treatment is an orthodox psychoanalytic interpretation; his second written thirty years later is part of his own effort to form a theory which is "Beyond Psychology," *i.e.*, beyond psychoanalysis.

Rank's last discussion of literary Doubles is based on his postulation of a universal striving for immortality or rebirth in man's non-instinctual but irrational will. This striving is especially strong in the artist type, says Rank in *Art and the Artist*, since the urge to create is essentially the urge to immortalize the self. While the average individual takes himself as given, the artist (and the neurotic who is essentially an artist manqué) cannot. The artist is continually striving to remold his ego in terms of self-created ideals, in order to perpetuate or immortalize himself. This perpetually re-created or reborn self is projected and justified in the art work.

In *Beyond Psychology*, Rank also postulates the immortalizing tendency as underlying social ideologies and forms of social organization, through which the individual attains collective immortality. Rank believes that one point at which the individual, self-immortalizing needs of the artist intersect with collective ideologies is in the literary use of the Double. This literary use parallels genuine folk-beliefs in many primitive cultures, as well as mythological themes. In these primitive cultures there is an equation of the individual's soul when alive, his ghost after death, and his actual shadow. This shadow-soul survives the individual's death, and may sometimes

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

leave the body in sleep, etc. There may, however, be some differences in appearance and character between the actual self and the ghostly Double.

Rank points out that in modern literature, the Double is usually a symbol of a character's past, his evil tendencies and his death rather than of future immortality, as in naive folk-beliefs. A typical example is E. T. A. Hoffman's *Story of the Lost Reflection,* in which the hero sells his mirror reflection (his "immortal soul") to a devil-figure. This reflection takes on a life of its own and persecutes its former owner until the victim attempts to kill it and so kills himself. (Wilde's *Picture of Dorian Grey* presents a similar theme.) Rank explains the modern negative attitude toward the Double as due to modern man's over-rationalistic alienation from life and death and from his own fundamentally irrational will.

Rank sees folk-beliefs and myths of the Double as related to the wide-spread mythology of twins. A common theme of myth is that of twins who have creative powers and who found cities and cultures (e.g., Romulus and Remus). Often in these myths, one twin is killed by the other, or is killed in his place. Rank interprets this as indicating a concept of the twins as Doubles, one of whom becomes immortal and creative through the death of his mortal counterpart. According to Rank, primitive cultures see Doubles and twins as duplicate selves necessary for immortality, just as patriarchal cultures see the son as a duplicate of the father, necessary for immortality.

Rank applies these suggestive ideas to Dostoevsky's Doubles in only a vague, brief and superficial fashion. Their importance, however, is suggested by the clinical literature on the autoscopic syndrome.[13] A number of the cases reported are like those of Mrs. A, cases in which the Double first appears immediately after the death of a significant person. In some sense the Double seems to be a substitute or resurrection of the lost person. In other cases, the Double represents, not a "resurrected self" but the self as dead. De Musset, just after walking through a cemetery, saw a hallucination of "a mysterious stranger which he recognized with terror as *himself,* twenty years older, with features ravaged by debauchery, eyes aghast with fear." A clinical case is reported of a woman in great anxiety, about to enter the hospital for surgical completion of a miscarriage, who was suddenly confronted by a realistic vision of herself lying in a coffin. This was the first appearance of a recurring mirror-like hallucination of a Double.[14]

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Our discussion suggests a close connection between Double or autoscopic experiences and epilepsy on the one hand, and concern about death and immortality on the other. Dostoevsky's extreme concern with death and immortality was expressed both in ideological and in symptomatic behavior.

On the ideological level, he wrote: "Without a superior idea, there cannot exist either the individual or the nation. But here on earth we have only one superior idea—the *immortality of the soul* because all other superior ideas have their source in this idea."[15]

On the symptomatic level, his fear of death was associated with his epileptic attacks. An attack was triggered off by passing a chance funeral procession. The association of death and epilepsy led him to fears of being buried alive, of being closed in for eternity. He would leave notes that he should not be buried for five days after an attack. His own Siberian sentence he viewed as a living burial after his near execution: "It is difficult to express how much I have suffered. These four years I look upon as a time of living burial. I was put in a coffin."[16] These feelings suggest that he feared not only death, but his own ghostly immortality in the face of his apparent death to the world.

Dostoevsky told his friends that his epileptic attacks were associated not only with fear of death and ghostly immortality, but with the joyful experiences of eternal life described by his epileptic figures Myshkin and Kirrilov.

The association we would expect between epilepsy, experiences of immortality, and the Double phenomenon is found in the grouping of these traits in Dostoevsky's characters. A number of both the Type II good Doubles (Myshkin, Kirrilov, Alyosha) and the Type I bad Doubles (Smerdyakov) have epileptic or epileptic-like seizures, while none of the other characters are portrayed as epileptic. In the good Doubles epilepsy is connected with a high rating on the trait, "Joyful experience in which eternal life is collapsed into an instant." All the Type I good Doubles are rated high on the trait, "Lives for and believes in positive immortality." Of Alyosha, Dostoevsky says: "As soon as he reflected seriously, he was convinced of the existence of God and immortality and instinctively said to himself: 'I want to live for immortality and I will accept no compromise.'"

If Dostoevsky's Type II good Doubles express his ideas, concerns and experiences of positive immortality, his Type I bad Doubles express his ideas and experience of negative immortality, of living

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

burial. Svidrigailov says: "We always imagine eternity as something beyond our conception, something vast. But why must it be vast? Instead of all that, what if it is one little room, like a bathhouse in the country, black and grimey and spiders in every corner, and that's all eternity is?"

Dostoevsky intended this to be a reflection of his Siberian "living burial" and wrote of *Crime and Punishment*, "My Dead House was really most interesting. And here again shall be a picture of a hell, of the same kind as that 'Turkish Bath in the Prison' (a chapter in the House of the Dead on the horrors of a multitude of naked, filthy bodies closely packed together in the prisoners' weekly steam-bath)."[17]

Svidrigailov in *Crime and Punishment* and Stavrogin in *The Possessed* are flesh and blood characters who are sinister alter-egos to others. Both also experience hallucinations which are directly said to represent the ghosts or resurrections of dead or murdered persons. In the passage on eternity just mentioned, Svidrigailov discussed his hallucinations of his dead wife Marfa (whom he has mistreated and probably murdered) and of a servant whom he drove to suicide. These hallucinations are not only experienced but believed in by Svidrigailov, who says, "I agree that ghosts only appear to the sick, but that only proves they are unable to appear except to the sick, not that they don't exist."

Stavrogin also has two related sets of hallucinations (described in the suppressed chapter of *The Possessed*). One is of the devil, the other is of the twelve-year-old girl whom he seduced and led to suicide.

At first sight, hallucinatory Doubles in the novels would seem to be one thing, and flesh and blood alter-egos another. The line of thinking we have pursued suggests, however, that the "living" bad Doubles may have a meaning similar to that of the "hallucinatory" bad Doubles. As in the case of Mrs. A, the Double is both a resurrection of a dead person and is the self.

EDITOR'S NOTE:

Dr. Kohlberg plans an expanded version of this article which will be published in the book based on this issue. His longer article will consider more fully the relationship of the Dostoevskyan Doubles—in *Crime and Punishment, The Possessed, The Idiot,* and *The Brothers Karamazov*—both to literary structures and to the moral ideologies they convey. It will involve more directly psychoanalytic interpretations as well as a fuller

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

statistical treatment. The preliminary findings are striking. The hallucinatory devil appears to be, according to Dr. Kohlberg's factor analysis, a resurrection of the murdered father. Psychoanalytically, the hallucinatory Doubles represent evil masculine sexuality, expressed in the defilement of young girls, while the "twin Doubles" represent a masculine identification on "an unnatural homosexual rather than on an unnatural heterosexual base." The "good Doubles" are Christ figures, whose major identification is with the shame and suffering of women, which they share but for which they feel guilty. These psychoanalytic meanings appear to clarify the sequences of appearances of the Doubles, as well as Dostoevsky's ideology of vicarious guilt and suffering.

References

1. P. C. Squires, "Fyodor Dostoevsky, A Psychopathographical Sketch" in *Psychoanalytic Review,* 24 (1937), pp. 365-388.
2. Sigmund Freud, "Dostoevsky and Parricide" in *Collected Papers,* Vol. V (London: Hogarth, 1950).
3. Smith and Isotoff, "Dostoevsky: the Abnormal from Within" in *Psychoanalytic Review,* 22 (1935), pp. 385-403.
4. Edna C. Florance, "The Neurosis of Raskolnikov; A Study in Incest and Murder" in *Archives of Criminal Psychodynamics,* 1 (1955), pp. 344-396.
5. E. Kris, *Psychoanalytic Exploration in Art* (New York: International University Press, 1952), Chapter 1. This chapter provides a good summary of recent psychoanalytic "ego-psychology" approaches to literature.
6. Otto Rank, "Der Doppelgänger" (Vienna: Internationale Psychoanalytische Verlag, 1925). Translated into French as "Don Juan, une étude sur le double" (Paris, 1932).
7. *The Letters of Fyodor Dostoevsky* (New York: Horizon, 1961).
8. N. Lukianowicz, "Autoscopic Phenomena" in *Archives of Neurology and Psychiatry,* 80 (1958), p. 199. This article is perhaps the best summary of clinical data on this phenomena, along with Reference 10.
9. S. Coleman, "The Phantom Double, Its Psychological Significance" in *British Journal of Medical Psychology,* 14 (1934), pp. 254-273.
10. J. Todd and K. Dewhurst, "The Double: Its Psychopathology and Psychophysiology" in *Journal of Nervous and Mental Diseases,* 122 (1955), pp. 47-56.
11. W. Stephenson, *Q Technique: The Study of Behavior* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953).
12. The detailed methods and results of this study will be reported in a professional psychological journal.
13. Lukianowicz, *op. cit.*
14. Todd and Dewhurst, *op. cit.*
15. *Diary of a Writer* (New York: Braziller, 1954).
16. *The Letters of Fyodor Dostoevsky.*
17. *Loc. cit*

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

SIMON O. LESSER

The Role of Unconscious Understanding in Flaubert and Dostoevsky

NORMAL JEALOUSY, Freud observes, is "by no means completely rational . . . it is rooted deep in the unconscious, it is a continuation of the earliest stirrings of the child's affective life. . . ." [1] Moreover, he continues, "it is noteworthy that in many persons it is experienced bisexually; that is to say, in a man, besides the suffering in regard to the loved woman and the hatred against the male rival, grief in regard to the unconsciously loved man and hatred of the woman as a rival will add to its intensity."

As Freud elsewhere rather ruefully acknowledged, writers of fiction had frequently been vouchsafed an understanding of psychological mechanisms earlier (and he felt more easily) than he and his colleagues. A half-century before Freud wrote, Dostoevsky displayed full unconscious understanding of normal jealousy experienced bisexually in several of his works, most especially *The Idiot*.

Some twelve years before the appearance of *The Idiot* in 1868, Gustave Flaubert published *Madame Bovary*, parts of which revolve around triangular situations. But neither of the triangles is developed in a way which shows more than a trace of the kind of knowledge Dostoevsky unconsciously possessed and communicated.

It is interesting to compare the way Flaubert and Dostoevsky handle these triangular situations because, as I shall try to show, they had quite similar psychosexual organizations. Both were bisexual; both firmly repressed or sublimated their homosexual feelings. Might not Flaubert, then, have "known" at some level all that Dostoevsky knew and, if he did, would he not have tended to endow Charles or one of the other male characters with some glimmering

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of his own unconscious understanding? If he didn't know or, knowing, withheld the knowledge from his characters or for some other reason was unable to make use of it, what accounts for this? And how does it happen that Dostoevsky *was* able to use his knowledge, though he, too, it must be emphasized, was never able to confront his homosexual tendencies?

If we can answer these questions even in part, if we can identify at least some of the factors which inhibited Flaubert and which explain Dostoevsky's unconscious understanding and his ability to make such good use of it, our knowledge of the creative process will be importantly enhanced.

In *The Idiot,* the three principal characters—Prince Myshkin, Rogozhin, and Nastasya Filippovna—are locked in an intense and highly complex relationship which for all of them, though in different ways and on different levels of awareness, gratifies deep-seated libidinal and sado-masochistic needs. From the time the two male characters meet in the opening chapter of the novel, they are drawn to one another—in part because Rogozhin's sadism meshes perfectly with Myshkin's masochism but also, we come to see, because of repressed homosexual feelings. However, they quickly become involved in a to-the-death struggle for Nastasya; the most dramatic portions of the novel focus on this struggle and the way the confused and tormented heroine vacillates between her two unlike lovers, fanning their jealousy and hatred—for *her* as well as for one another. At the same time we see that she is a link between the rivals, each of whom acts out some of his feelings for the other through her. No more than occasional hints are needed to make us realize that their mutual jealously is based in part on "grief in regard to the unconsciously loved man and hatred of the woman as a rival."

Since Myshkin represses his unsanctioned impulses even as he acts some of them out through his more passionate companions, all of his stronger feelings, including his jealousy, must be conveyed to us by means of unconscious manifestations or other forms of indirect evidence. There is abundant evidence of this sort for both Myshkin's inability to give up Nastasya and for his enmity toward Rogozhin. In the nature of the case, the evidence of the bisexual component of his jealousy is still more carefully hidden. The hatred we would expect to find for Nastasya is completely denied: it is, as it were, taken care of by Rogozhin and replaced in

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Myshkin by feelings deriving from it—fear and pity. In the long middle section of the novel, the Prince's grief and unextirpated feelings for Rogozhin have to be conveyed by small indications of continuing interest, for Rogozhin is seldom on-scene; but the business of that section of the novel is Myshkin's effort to make a reasonably normal adjustment to Russian society and to free himself from the neurotic triangular relationship with Nastasya and Rogozhin, which despite his efforts continues to hold him.

For the most part Rogozhin's jealousy, unlike Myshkin's, is revealed quite openly. Even his hatred of Nastasya is directly expressed, though we may tend to assume that it stems solely from the suffering she has caused him. But if there is any doubt that she is hated also *as a rival,* and that to the very end there is a strong homosexual bond between Rogozhin and Myshkin, it is dispelled in the stunning climax of the novel. In that scene, there is no hatred or jealousy; the books have been closed on both emotions. Nastasya Filippovna has been killed by the tortured Rogozhin. The Prince has been looking for him, and in due time Rogozhin goes out, looks for and finds the Prince. Speaking only in whispers he leads Myshkin to a gloomy, darkened room in his gloomy home and shows him the corpse of the woman who had been at once a bond between them and the cause of their separation and rivalry. Even though Rogozhin is now half-demented, his homosexual feelings, like the Prince's, remain unacknowledged. Still, one idea obsesses him: he and his friend must sleep together, keep vigil over the dead Nastasya and not let anyone take her away:

> It was clear that he had thought of the bed perhaps even that morning. The night before he had lain down on the sofa. But there was no room for two on the sofa, and he had made up his mind that they should lie side by side, and that was why he now dragged, with a great effort, cushions of all shapes and sizes across the whole room from the two sofas and placed them near the curtain. Somehow or other he managed to make up the bed; he then went up to the prince, took him tenderly and rapturously by the arm, raised him up, and led him to the bed; . . .[2]

Even if we disregard the evidence which could be culled from some of his other works, it seems clear that at the unconscious level Dostoevsky knew everything there is to know about the kind of normal jealousy in which a tender feeling for the male rival plays a part. The unconscious nature of the knowledge must be emphasized. Myshkin was conceived as a Christ-like character, and if anyone had asked Dostoevsky if the Prince had any sexually-tinged

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

feeling for another man I feel sure that the idea would have been angrily repudiated. On the other hand, the inclusive nature of the knowledge must be stressed also. At one place or another Dostoevsky shows an awareness of practically all the components of jealousy Freud discusses. The word "intuitive," insofar as it suggests a flashing, partial kind of insight, is quite inadequate to describe his knowledge. It seems almost worthy of being called comprehensive.

In *Madame Bovary,* Flaubert reveals no such unconscious understanding of jealousy in depicting either Emma's relationship with Rodolphe (Part Two) or her relationship with Leon (Part Three). Charles unwittingly helps to set up both of his wife's affairs. He has conscious knowledge of some of her meetings with Rodolphe, and both affairs are so protracted and ill-concealed that, were we dealing with real life, we would have to assume that Charles would be compelled to utilize repression or some other defense mechanism not to become at least fugitively aware of them. But Charles is not shown to have any feeling for either of Emma's lovers. Indeed, it is not granted him to display any feelings of jealousy whatever, nor—if we except one occasion when he is forced to wonder if "something" wasn't wrong—any suspicions. Nor do Rodolphe and Leon have any but the most casual feelings for him.

Since Charles is intended to be an example of bourgeois stupidity, our first inclination might be to attribute his blindness to conscious artistic intent. But a close look at the novel suggests that Flaubert's artistic purposes neither required him to make Charles anywhere nearly as blind as he is nor were well served by his doing so. *Madame Bovary* begins and ends with Charles; his role not only allows but calls for him to be the second most interesting character in the novel. Instead, most of the time he is a "flat" character, not only unexciting to Emma—that *is,* of course, part of the conscious design—but to us. Significantly, he escapes these limitations and comes to life only in those moments when he is vouchsafed a degree of understanding—at the end of the novel when he becomes consciously aware of Emma's infidelities and, after the debacle of the operation, when turning to her for sympathy he is rejected so harshly that he weeps, "feeling vaguely as though some baneful, incomprehensible influence were hovering about him."[3]

In terms of our analysis, "vague feelings" can be equated with unconscious apprehensions—and all we are discussing, it should be remembered, is the possible wisdom of permitting Charles to

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

show more understanding on this level. He could have been granted many more such apprehensions, I submit, and the artistic results would be entirely beneficent: he would have still been plodding and pedestrian, quite obtuse enough to irritate his easily irritated wife, but he would be far more appealing to the reader. Instead of a caricature or figure in a morality play, which is what he now seems for long stretches, he would be a rounded human being. He would arouse our sympathy and compassion, not simply our pity.

Granted such apprehensions, moreover, he could have been permitted to become dimly suspicious of his wife and the innocence of her rides with Rodolphe and, later, her visits to Rouen. Then he could have even been shown to have some covert feelings about the other men Emma was seeing or might be seeing. Jealousy after all, even when conscious, is an affective state, and not incompatible with stupidity. Interestingly, however, not even Leon and Rodolphe, who are pictured as somewhat more intelligent than Charles, are allowed any of the feelings I am suggesting Charles might have been shown to entertain, to the benefit rather than the detriment of *Madame Bovary* as a novel.

The *excessive* stupidity that Charles exhibits to almost the very end of the novel and the complete lack of feeling among the men romantically involved with Emma point in quite a different direction from "conscious design." They suggest that some powerful hidden forces must have been working on the writer who created these characters, forces that drove him to keep Charles almost completely blind and to keep Rodolphe and Leon selectively blind and anesthetized. The writer in question was not only highly intelligent and talented but bisexual—capable, we might suppose, of creating male characters only a shade less complex than Dostoevsky's. Though the pertinency of the observation may not be immediately apparent, let us keep in mind the fact that he *did* create Emma Bovary.

The whole pattern of Flaubert's life reveals his bisexuality. He never married. He lived with his mother almost his entire life. The one woman to whom he felt romantically attracted, Elisa Schlesinger, was clearly a mother surrogate. When Gustave met her during a long seaside holiday in the summer of 1836, he was all of fourteen; she was already twenty-six, married and the mother of an infant. His one protracted sexual relationship with a woman, the affair with Louise Colet, was intermittent and stormy. His fear

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and dislike of her were almost as strong as his passion, with the result that even in the first and most ardent phase of their relationship, which lasted about two years, he found reasons for seeing her only six times, and then for short periods. In contrast, Flaubert had three idealized, long-continued and highly satisfying relationships with men, and even some of the vicissitudes these relationships underwent hint at his latent homosexuality: for example, he never entirely forgave his adored friend Alfred Le Poittevin for marrying.

Flaubert's relationships with his parents help to explain, if they do not foreshadow, his psychosexual development. His father, Achille-Cleophas Flaubert, was head of the municipal hospital of Rouen—successful, highly regarded, and, the evidence suggests, authoritative: altogether a formidable figure. It may be conjectured that Gustave never worked out his Oedipal hostility, envy and fear of his father—the preliminary to achieving a satisfactory identification with him. Flaubert's arrested sexual development and inability, even after his father's death, to achieve a good relationship with a woman is only one strand of evidence for this failure. It is perhaps equally significant that, when he was twenty-one, despite his peremptory literary ambitions, he bowed to his father's will and agreed to study for the law. He did not contrive his escape until his second year in law school and then not by asserting his independence but by the roundabout means of succumbing to a crippling illness evidently hysterical in nature. By the time he had recovered, some two years later, his father, and also his sister, had died. Now Gustave felt free to pursue his own choice of career. He settled down with his idealized and beloved mother on an estate his father had bought at Croisset, on the Seine outside Rouen, and, except for travel and visits, never thereafter left her or it. Some of the letters he wrote his mother during his absences contain declarations of love which would be less embarrassing if they were addressed to a wife or a mistress rather than a mother. When his mother died, in April 1872, only eight years before Gustave's death, he wrote Georges Sand: "I have realized during the past fortnight that my poor dear mother was the human being I loved the most." This was not a mere expression of grief, or hyperbole, but the literal truth.

The kind of arrestment evident in Gustave's relations with his parents may easily lead to overt homosexuality or some form of perversion. It is not surprising that Flaubert had a deep fear of marriage and fatherhood, which found expression in his life, his letters and his fiction, that his sexual urge was enfeebled, and that his

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

one attempt to achieve a relatively "normal" relationship with a woman was unsuccessful. In extenuation it might be urged that the woman, Louise Colet, was aggressive and dominating, and perhaps also more than ordinarily passionate and demanding, the embodiment of some of the things that made women frightening. But it is possible that if she had not been somewhat masculine Flaubert would not have been attracted to her, and that if she had not been ardent enough to encourage his timid advances, he would not have possessed her. In any case our sympathies tend to shift to her when we find Flaubert maintaining that "When two persons love, they can go ten years without seeing each other and without suffering any ill effects therefrom."

The relationships with men were less demanding and less threatening. The three men with whom Flaubert had protracted relationships, Alfred Le Poittevin, Louis Bouilhet and Maxime Du Camp, were not only congenial but shared Flaubert's literary interests and his commitment to Art with a capital A. They were respected and trusted; indeed, in retrospect, it would appear that Flaubert overestimated the talent of his friends. His faith in their literary judgment was astonishing. He abandoned the first draft of *The Temptation of Saint Anthony,* which he had hoped would be a "thunderclap" and had worked on for three years, when Louis and Maxime told him it was bad. While the friendships were nourished by a mutality of interests, it is clear that they were libidinally gratifying also. With the exception of Flaubert's attachment to his mother, the relationships with his male friends may be said to have dominated his affective life.

Flaubert's dread of having to face his latent homosexuality was evidently intense. It must be assumed that a great deal of psychic energy was consumed throughout his life in keeping any indications of it from consciousness. Even if no other forces had been operating upon him during the composition of *Madame Bovary,* it seems probable that this dread would have been powerful enough to stir the defensive operations of the unconscious ego into activity and to prevent Charles from being characterized in a way that would betray his creator's well-kept secret.

As it happens, however, the one unconscious factor was powerfully reinforced by others. The combined strength of these factors, which of course made themselves felt collectively, had a decisive influence, I believe, on the way Charles was delineated.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The first reinforcing factor is a supreme example of the kind of cunning accommodations which are sometimes arrived at in the psyche, and which find expression in neurotic symptoms and dreams as well as in art. Flaubert *did* manage to find an outlet for his bisexual urges in writing *Madame Bovary:* he found it in securely disguised form through his identification with Emma. This identification was not only more hidden and hence less dangerous; it offered infinitely richer opportunities for libidinal gratification. Moreover, the identification was an easier one for Flaubert to slip into. He had an acceptable preconscious reason for identifying with Emma. In essence her situation was his own: he too felt that he was being deprived and thwarted by a stupid society, indifferent to his deepest needs. Behind Emma, moreover, there perhaps lurked another woman. It may be conjectured that Flaubert's closest identification in infancy was with his mother rather than with his father. His bisexuality is warrant for the further assumption that the pattern of using identification with a woman as a means of securing libidinal gratification may also have already been laid down.

There was infinite duplicity in this identification. Flaubert could declare "Madame Bovary, c'est moi!" and anticipate that readers would see no more than that she was a symbol of his own rebellion against bourgeois society. He even had a second prepared position to retreat to. Since Emma was a woman, not even the recognition that she was bisexual would divulge the fact that *he* was—or compel him to recognize it.

Nevertheless, it must be assumed that at some level Flaubert "knew" what kind of forbidden gratifications he was experiencing through his little Emma and that certain concessions had to be made to placate his ego and superego. The first of these may be conceived as a kind of pact arrived at by the warring factions in Flaubert's psyche. His libido was permitted this gratification only on condition that it not be noticed; Flaubert as Charles must not know what Flaubert as Emma was up to—and be surprised, outraged and broken when at long last he finds out. If Emma is the representative of Flaubert's libido or id, Charles is, inter alia, the representative of his hoodwinked ego. This way of structuring the situation brings us to the second concession made to secure the libidinal gratification. If Charles had to be punished for his obliging blindness, Emma had to be punished still more severely for her illicit and destructive behavior. From one point of view *Madame Bovary* may be regarded as a cautionary tale, and the person for

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

whom the "danger" signal was primarily intended was Flaubert himself. If Emma had been less drastically punished, or vouchsafed more happiness, his own bisexual impulses might have become harder to control.

There is more evidence than can or need be cited of Emma's bisexuality. If one disregards such incidental indications as her envy of Rodolphe's promiscuity and her reasons for desiring a boy rather than a girl, Emma's masculine tendencies are betrayed by her efforts to dominate all of the men in her life. She succeeds not only with Charles but with Leon. "He had become her mistress rather than she his" (p. 289). Rodolphe alone escapes being mastered by her—and he because he recognizes that she is "tyrannical and interfering" (p. 202) and is sufficiently uninvolved to defend himself adroitly. Through the identification with Emma, Flaubert secured rich vicarious gratification of both his masculine and feminine sexual needs.

The gratification had a curious secondary consequence: it reduced the need to use Charles (and of course Rodolphe and Leon also) for the same purpose. Thus the forces in Flaubert which were mobilized to keep him from endowing Charles with his own psychosexual organization did not have to fight as hard as they otherwise might have. But the effects upon the novel itself of the almost too satisfactory discharge of libido through Emma, are mixed. Her bisexuality contributes to her complexity and almost preternatural vitality. But the full erotic release Flaubert secures through Emma is partly responsible, I believe, for the devitalization and partial desexualization of the men with whom she becomes involved, most especially Charles. If all three men strike us as somewhat pallid, it is in part an indirect result of the liberality with which Flaubert provides Emma with libido and opportunities for gratifying it.

As though it were not enough to want to deprive Charles of his own bisexuality and keep him in blindness about Emma, Flaubert had still another reason for picturing his leading male protagonist as obtuse and futile: he hated him.

This hatred, like the sympathy for Emma, had a conscious or preconscious basis and a deep under-structure. At a scarcely concealed level Charles represents an abhorred aspect of the abhorred bourgeoisie: their dullness, their torpor, their almost animal-like preoccupation with bodily and material things. But Flaubert hated these aspects of the bourgeoisie, there is reason to believe, because they represented the fulfillment of certain of his own tendencies

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

which he feared and fought unremittingly: they represented what he felt he might become if he did not devote himself to art and what he sometimes thought of himself as being even though he *did* devote himself to it—a too passive, dull, stodgy, plodding human being. Usually Flaubert plumed himself upon the slowness with which he worked—it was testimony, he assured himself, to his scrupulousness as an artist—but at other times, most especially during the period when he was writing *Madame Bovary,* he could not down the fear that, on the contrary, his snail-like progress revealed his limitations.[4] Actually, if Flaubert could not write *Bovary,* as he lamented, at anywhere near the speed at which he had written *The Temptation of Saint Anthony,* it was chiefly, I believe, because he was treading on eggs. The fear of divulging his homosexuality not only compelled him to make numerous delicate adjustments, of the kind here discussed, but to screen everything even more carefully than he usually did to make sure that the devices and disguises he was resorting to were achieving their purpose. Whether the fears of being a plodder were justified or not, it must have afforded Flaubert considerable relief to be able to project them onto Charles. He felt no conflict about depicting *him* as sluggish. Indeed, impelled by his dislike and the need to make Charles also a cautionary figure, an image of what he, Flaubert, might become if he yielded to his passive inclinations, he pictured him as totally devoid of drive and ability. There is some irony in the fact that the more stupid and spiritless he was made, the more he was hated by his creator.

At a still deeper level, Charles represented a still earlier enemy. Behind the bungling, unsuccessful, lightly regarded Officer of Health, it is possible to discern a wish-fulfilling reversed portrait of Charles's evidently competent, eminently successful and highly regarded father. Looked at closely, all the essential parts of the portrait fall into place. Apart from being decent and well-meaning, Dr. Flaubert was conscientious and hard working. His son concedes this much, and assigns these qualities to Charles. But did Gustave's father really know what he was about during all those interminable hours he spent in the hospital and in the morgue where Gustave and his sister Caroline, for whom Dr. Flaubert had no time, would sometimes spy on him, though they knew that if they were noticed, they would be frowned at and waved away. It may be supposed that, if only because the tasks which preempted nearly all his father's time were resented, his excluded son, struggling with the conflicting emo-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tions of admiration and envy, sometimes doubted his father's competence.

Gustave had a better objective basis for thinking his father unperceptive. Beginning in boyhood Gustave had begun to write plays and stories; his literary ambitions had real substance. Nevertheless, Dr. Flaubert had decreed that his son should study for the law. Nor did he show any more understanding when his son became seriously ill. More than a year and a half after his first attack, Gustave, who had recovered sufficiently to do a great deal of additional writing, summoned the courage to speak to his father about pursuing a literary career. Dr. Flaubert agreed to listen to some of his son's work, then fell asleep during the reading! Awakening, he neither apologized, commented on what he may have heard, or offered his son an opportunity to continue the reading. He simply remarked, "If a pen had been *my* only tool, my family would have starved" and took his departure. Thereafter Gustave felt open animosity towards his father and expressed it in letters to his literary friends.

Flaubert's hatred of Charles had many sources, conscious and unconscious. Whereas he satisfied his unacknowledged sexual cravings through Emma, he discharged his no less intense aggressive feelings *upon* Charles. But one would not be justified in leaping to the conclusion that such hostility inevitably has deleterious artistic effects. In *Madame Bovary* itself there is a character who should make us hesitate about accepting so sweeping a generalization: Homais. So far as one can tell, the hatred felt for Homais was much closer to the surface. But I believe that the nature of their roles does far more to explain the quite different ways Flaubert's hostility affected his portrayals of Charles and Homais. A negative quality of Charles is stressed—his stupidity. Flaubert could document it easily by piling blow upon blow—by making Charles unperceptive time after time, by having him invariably say just the wrong thing. In contrast, to bring out Homais' hateful qualities—for example, the disparities between his progressive facade and his actual conduct, in particular the indefatigability, cunning and even unscrupulousness with which he pursued his self-interest—Flaubert was compelled to invent and specify, to show Homais saying and doing a wide variety of things, many of them interesting precisely because they betray his duplicity.

We may have chanced here on a general point of some importance. Many discussions of the creative process seem to take it for granted that certain factors affecting it are desirable or undesirable

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in themselves, that they always have substantially the same effects. In actuality, matters are probably seldom so simple. What is of decisive importance in many if not most instances, the present study would suggest, is rather the way the various conscious, preconscious and unconscious forces playing upon an author interact with one another and intersect with the requirements of a particular work or those parts of it affected by the forces.

As a writer of fiction if not as a man, Dostoevsky was more fortunate than Flaubert. Because of his real-life experience and above all his incredibly rich psychic activity, Dostoevsky knew more than the French novelist about the human heart—knew more, in a sense which must be carefully defined, than all but a handful of the people who have ever lived. A relatively large amount of this extraordinary fund of knowledge was actually available to him. Even the conditions under which he worked, though they cost him great suffering, were advantageous to his art; they virtually precluded his screening his material to see what it might reveal about himself. All of these things set the stage for him to create such characters as Myshkin and Rogozhin and to endow them with his bisexuality, his sado-masochistic tendencies and many other characteristics of which his own psyche was the original source. In addition, as I shall try to show, there were forces in Dostoevsky prodding him to use the kind of material which appears in *The Idiot* and his other great works, material many writers would have shunned if it had been available to them to begin with. The nature of Dostoevsky's psychic activity, structure and needs happened to mesh perfectly with the requirements of his craft.

In a sense Dostoevsky's experience is the ultimate source of the almost unparalleled knowledge of character he displays. He was a more complex and comprehensive person than Flaubert. His internal as well as his external experience was more varied and more intense. But if his psychic structure had been different, much less of his knowledge would have been at his disposal for later use. It must be assumed that throughout Dostoevsky's life, not simply when he was engaged in writing fiction, many questionable ideas gained admission to consciousness, and that some of them were either not securely repressed or not repressed at all. In effect, he accumulated a file about the vagaries of the psyche—or, more accurately, *files,* for the knowledge was stored at all levels—conscious, preconscious and unconscious.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

For our purposes the essential point to observe about Dostoevsky's psychic structure is that throughout his life both his instinctual impulses and his superego possessed extraordinary strength; his ego was squeezed between these powerful antagonists. It was never able to reconcile their conflicting claims well enough to achieve a stable balance. There was almost continuous intrapsychic warfare; and the conflicting claims of id and superego could barely be controlled, much less silenced. In disguised if not direct fashion they frequently forced themselves into awareness. One has the feeling that in Dostoevsky the barriers between unconscious, preconscious and conscious were exceptionally permeable. That "flexibility of the repressions" which plays such a vital part in creative achievement, and which some artists go to extraordinary lengths to bring about, imposed itself upon Dostoevsky.

Dostoevsky not only had comparatively easy "access to the unconscious"; in his case the unconscious seems to have been in a more or less constant state of eruption. His notes and letters and reports of his conversations, as well as his fiction, indicate that he was frequently presented with "ideas" which in all probability would never have occurred to a writer like Flaubert. It would be a mistake to assume that all the ideas which hovered on the threshhold of Dostoevsky's mind could be entertained without anxiety. A frequent purpose of his epileptic attacks, I suspect, was one he ascribed to Myshkin: to keep certain ideas from consciousness.

A second consequence of Dostoevsky's psychic organization is that his ego was too busily occupied and perhaps too careless, even demoralized, to subject the material used in his fiction to careful screening to exclude disturbing material or material which might reveal something damaging about Dostoevsky himself. Here also it is easy to exaggerate matters. It is likely both that some screening went on and that the use of certain material involved a heavy cost. But as compared with Flaubert and most other writers Dostoevsky was not fussy. It would seldom have been feasible for him to be so even if the inclination were there. The same kinds of intemperate impulses reveal themselves in practically all the material which presented itself to him for possible use in his fiction, including the variant plans he sometimes developed before proceeding with a particular work. Moreover, Dostoevsky could seldom bring himself to get down to work until his situation was so desperate that he had to produce at frantic speed. *The Idiot* was written under harrowing conditions.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Dostoevsky's use of his unconscious knowledge was also facilitated by the fact that his imagination was predominantly dramatic and visual. In consequence he did not have to "understand" his material in the customary sense of that word. His knowledge came to him in concrete and often disguised form—as an idea for a story, a particular scene, or an incidental bit of "business" (Myshkin twice absent-mindedly picking up a knife during his first visit to Rogozhin's home). The significance of the material was not intellectually grasped, or at best was grasped but dimly, even as it was being used; Dostoevsky could show characters doing or feeling certain things which he was sure they would do or feel, even though he could not fully explain why this was so. This is a strange sort of knowledge perhaps; yet long before Freud its existence was occasionally noted. In the "Apology" Plato has Socrates declare: "[Poets] are like diviners or soothsayers who also say many fine things, but do not understand the meaning of them."[5]

As is obvious, this kind of knowledge is not readily available for general intellectual purposes, for example as a basis for generalizations and abstract thought or as a clue to self-understanding. Certainly it was not available to Dostoevsky for such purposes; he was not a conceptual thinker nor—despite the skill with which he analyzed his characters—possessed of much insight into his own behavior. However, his knowledge, in the form in which it was possessed, was an asset of incalculable value for a writer of fiction.

"Sometimes when my heart is swimming with love," Dostoevsky wrote his brother Mikhail while still a young man, "you can't pull a kind word out of me." Did he know, then, of the extent to which irritability, sullenness and spitefulness are often based on repressed hostility? In a way, yes. He "knew" well enough to make the unprepossessing "hero" of *Notes from Underground* not only credible but in the end, half against our will, sympathetic. He used the knowledge also in drawing the principals in "The Eternal Husband," Trusotsky and Velchaninov, and a host of other characters. But he did not know what he knew in a way which would have permitted him to state his knowledge in general terms, or to identify repressed hostility as the source of his own frequent ill-humor.

In precisely the same way he knew a thousand other things—specific things, the way that the discovery of some small detail can make one decide on a course of action which until then had seemed conjectural and unreal; or the way two apparently contradictory ideas can occur to one at the same time. He knew how difficult it

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

is to love your neighbor as yourself, and how invariably even intense love is admixed with hate. He knew how readily impulses to such crimes as calumny, profligacy, rape, pedophilia, murder and even parricide could find a haven not simply in the hearts of "others"—for example, abandoned criminals—but in people like himself, intelligent and capable of generous and idealistic feelings. He knew that the human heart is "roomy," capable of accommodating more loves and more kinds of love than morality would always sanction or common sense find coherent.

In the same way, also, Dostoevsky knew everything he has Myshkin, Rogozhin and Nastasya Filippovna feel or experience. His repressed hostility and ambivalence have been referred to. The whole pattern of his life bears witness to the presence of the sadistic and masochistic tendencies with which he endowed the three principal characters in *The Idiot,* and his sadism would be even more apparent were it not that, as Freud points out, most of it was directed against his own person; it was one of the factors responsible for his strong sense of guilt. He had had one neurotic, unhappy marriage with a woman with whom, at times at least, he may have been impotent. He had formed warm relationships with both this woman's first husband and the young man in Kuznetzk to whom she became attached after her husband's death. There are still other indications of latent homosexuality, but it is perhaps unnecessary to marshal the evidence; the diagnosis has already been made by so qualified an observer as Freud:

> . . . Such a [bisexual] predisposition must certainly be assumed in Dostoevsky, and it shows itself in a viable form (as latent homosexuality) in the important part played by male friendships in his life, in his strangely tender attitude towards rivals in love and in his remarkable understanding of situations which are explicable only by repressed homosexuality, as many examples from his novels show.[6]

Though Dostoevsky's unusual psychic organization helps to explain both his knowledge of man's perversity and the ease with which he could call upon that knowledge, it does not fully explain his actual use of what he knew. Another writer possessing similar knowledge might have used it sparingly or not at all, if only because of the fears of revealing or having to recognize too much which unconsciously inhibited Flaubert. Some other force was at work in Dostoevsky which *impelled* him to divulge his almost shameless understanding of the underside of the human heart even when de-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

lineating a character like Myshkin. Not until we have identified that force can we feel that our inquiry is complete.

The key to Dostoevsky's need to issue report after report on precisely those aspects of human nature which are usually permitted to go unreported, lies, I believe, in what is perhaps the salient characteristic of his personality, his "unappeasable sense of guilt."[7] We know at least some of the sources of his oppressive guilt feelings. The young Dostoevsky had an unusually severe father to contend with, and the evidence suggests that his own rebellious and aggressive feelings were exceptionally intense. If we knew no more than this, we would expect that his superego would have been exacting. The fact that his parricidal impulses would have seemed to have been fulfilled by the seditious serfs who killed his father must have revived and intensified his Oedipal guilt feelings. The onanism Freud discerns behind Dostoevsky's later passion for gambling and the accompanying fantasies may have also contributed to feelings of guilt and unworthiness. In general the demands of his never well-subdued instincts must have been hard to accept; at times he may have thought of himself as depraved. Ironically, even some of the punishments he imposed upon himself to placate his superego—for example, his heavy losses at gambling and, of course, the abdications of responsibility to which the losses led—may have also been a source of later self-reproach. Throughout his life Dostoevsky had to wage a continual and never more than temporarily and partially successful battle against a tormenting superego.

Unconsciously, it may be assumed, Dostoevsky was constantly searching for ways of reducing the pressure of guilt. Freud has commented on one of the mechanisms he used to achieve this end, his tendency to identify with criminals. It was evidently also the need to reduce guilt which drew Dostoevsky to Christianity. What particularly appealed to him was the figure of Christ, who took the sins of mankind upon his shoulders, and the doctrine that the acknowledgement of one's sinfulness is the prerequisite for forgiveness and redemption.

Both Dostoevsky's interest in Christianity and his identification with criminals are illustrations, I believe, of a life-long tendency to rely on a single basic mechanism for reducing guilt—the acknowledgment of one's unworthiness. This, he seems to have felt, was the indispensable first step for securing forgiveness, acceptance and love. It may be conjectured that there was some prototype experience in early childhood which cut an indentation for this belief. Perhaps

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the young Fyodor confessed some "bad" activity, or was caught in it, and instead of being punished, or after being punished, was forgiven and assured of the continuing love of the strict but loved parent.

It seems certain that in Dostoevsky the connections between confession, forgiveness and guilt reduction were firmly fixed. He was tormented by what might be called *an urge to confess*. On a few occasions of intense emotional excitement he may have yielded to the urge directly and publicly; the evidence on this point is contradictory and uncertain.[8] But disturbed as he was, it is not to be supposed that he frequently satisfied the impulse so openly. The punishment he had endured for his early imprudences and his suspicious belief that many of his colleagues were envious of him would have reinforced the conventional reasons for reticence. But Dostoevsky must have discovered very early in life that he could *vicariously* satisfy the urge, in perfect security, through his writing. In his fiction, indeed, he could even give body to disavowed impulses and confess them as well as his misdeeds—and no one knew better than he, the creator of Ivan, Dmitri and Alyosha as well as Smerdyakov, of Myshkin as well as Rogozhin, how inextricably interrelated the two are and how necessary it is to expiate both.

The influence of the urge to confess makes itself felt in many ways in Dostoevsky's fiction, most obviously perhaps in the frequency with which he has his characters avail themselves of it. The formal confessions, moreover, are only a small part of the whole. Much of the introspection in which Dostoevsky's characters engage and many of the interchanges between them are fragments of confession. Those of his characters who resort to crime, lechery, drink, buffoonery or some other form of self-destructive behavior as a way of becoming aware of their own unworthiness are also confessing to themselves.

Taken as a whole, moreover, most of Dostoevsky's stories are confessions, his own confessions; and they are this in a dynamic not simply a metaphorical sense. The strongest unconscious force propelling him to write was the urge to confess and thus alleviate feelings of guilt. More, the urge to confess determined the *kind* of fiction Dostoevsky wrote—why, for example, he wrote so frequently of unbridled egoists, criminals, sinners and wastrels, people who, however great-hearted, could not cope with their lusts, their aggressions or their responsibilities. Finally, the urge to confess explains why he wrote with such relentless honesty as he did in *The Idiot*

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and felt less inclination to suppress than to proclaim evidence of impulses other writers would not have permitted their characters to experience.

Of course, the writing of fiction provided still other satisfactions and was undertaken for still other reasons. For example, it permitted vicarious gratification of Dostoevsky's turbulent repressed impulses, and this in turn made those impulses somewhat more amenable to control. But basically, I believe, Dostoevsky wrote to relieve feelings of guilt. Through his fiction, transgressions and even impulses to transgress could be expiated by punishment and suffering. Because that which can be shared is less terrible than that which must be experienced in isolation, the clandestine confessions made through his fiction afforded some immediate relief. But more important, they offered the promise of forgiveness. In effect, Dostoevsky was confessing to an anonymous group of people, his readers; their acceptance of a story and favorable reactions to it would seem equivalent to forgiveness and love. In the aggregate, I believe, the prospect of obtaining such satisfactions as these constituted a positive incentive for doing what his peculiar psychic structure permitted him to do—disclose and body forth impulses which usually escape detection.

Since this study has focussed on just a portion of the work of two writers, a question may arise about the extent to which the unconscious influences discerned, normally affect the creative process. Though the differences between Flaubert and Dostoevsky suggest the hazards of generalizing, some conclusions can, I believe, be drawn.

While the particular forces which affected Flaubert are unique, they are probably *representative* of the ways in which the unconscious influences writers generally. The subliminal dread of having to perceive something one would prefer to keep hidden almost invariably discourages the use of unconscious knowledge, though as Flaubert's treatment of Emma indicates, it does not preclude it when something struggling for expression is well enough disguised. Similarly, unconscious reasons for liking or disliking a character will almost certainly affect the way he is drawn, though the exact nature of the influence they exert will depend in part upon their relationship to conscious and preconscious attitudes, and upon the objective requirements of the characterization.

In contrast, most of the unconscious factors which help to explain Dostoevsky's achievement have a limited applicability. Among

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

people who function well enough to be more than occasional writers, few have probably had so weak a psychic organization, poised precariously just this side of psychosis. Thus few have been vouchsafed Dostoevsky's astonishing repertory of unconscious knowledge, much less his ability to draw upon it almost at will for his fiction. Even fewer writers, it is safe to say, have been driven to write by the unconscious need to confess their unworthiness and thus reduce guilt. Only a handful of writers have been preoccupied to the extent Dostoevsky was with the seamier side of man's nature, and there is no reason for supposing that more than a minority of these shared the preoccupation out of the same inner needs which tormented Dostoevsky.

So far as I am aware, the writing of fiction is more conducive to honesty than is any other form of writing or any other activity. The fiction writer can at once confess and conceal: he can displace his own forbidden tendencies upon the characters he creates, yet make them so "real" and autonomous that few will even suspect that they are disguised versions of himself. On the basis of some dim intuitive understanding of their feelings which permits him to show what they would do, he can communicate many things about them he himself could not formulate—and might disavow if he were to hear them formulated by someone else. Thus he of all people can tell the truth—disclose rather than hide the terrible desires which haunt the fringes of his consciousness. Still, the writer of fiction is a human being, subject to the same fears and anxieties which have given birth to repression and other mechanisms for keeping unwelcome and dangerous information hidden. We can stand only so much of the truth. Let the admission of some fraction of it endanger the balance of forces in our psyche or, in however roundabout a way, threaten to reveal something about ourselves we prefer to keep hidden, and energies are mobilized to keep the dangerous tidings from consciousness. It was fortunate for literature and for humanity that when he practiced his craft Dostoevsky was not only relatively immune to this mechanism but subject to unconscious pressures which impelled him to tell as much of the truth as he knew or could divine.

References

1. Sigmund Freud, "Certain Neurotic Mechanisms in Jealousy, Paranoia and Homosexuality," in *Collected Papers*, Vol. II (London: Hogarth, 1924), pp. 232-233.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

2. Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Idiot.* Translated by David Magarshack (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1961), p. 654. For a fuller discussion of the novel, see Lesser, "Saint and Sinner—Dostoevsky's Idiot," in *Modern Fiction Studies,* Vol. 4, No. 3 (Autumn 1958).
3. Gustave Flaubert, *Madame Bovary.* Translated by Alan Russel (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1961).
4. For some particularly striking expressions of this fear, see Francis Steegmuller, *Flaubert and Madame Bovary* (London: Collins, 1947), pp. 269-270.
5. See Lesser, *Fiction and the Unconscious* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1957), especially Chapters VI and IX, for a fuller discussion of the way meanings may be transmitted in fiction without being formulated in conceptual terms.
6. Freud, "Dostoevsky and Parricide," in *Collected Papers,* Vol. V (London: Hogarth, 1950).
7. Avrahm Yarmolinsky, *Dostoevsky, His Life and Art* (New York: Grove Press, 1960), p. 313.
8. _____ pp. 298-303.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Notes on Contributors

PETER BROOKS, born in 1938, is a graduate student at Harvard and a Teaching Fellow in Humanities. He was recipient of a Bowdoin and a Susan Anthony Porter prize. At present, he is in Paris on a Tower fellowship.

BREWSTER GHISELIN, born in 1903, is Professor of English and Director of the Annual Writers' Conference at the University of Utah. He has lectured extensively on art and creativity. His publications include two volumes of his own poems, numerous other books, critical articles, and short stories. He has contributed two chapters to *Scientific Creativity*, to be published early in 1963.

ALBERT J. GUERARD, guest editor of this issue, was on the faculty at Harvard from 1938 to 1961, and is now Professor of English at Stanford. He has written critical books on Robert Bridges, Thomas Hardy, André Gide, and Joseph Conrad; and has published six novels, including *The Hunted, Night Journey,* and *The Bystander.* His most recent novel, *The Exiles,* has just been published.

ROBERT KIELY, born in 1931, is Briggs-Copeland Instructor in English at Harvard University and Assistant Senior Tutor at Leverett House. In 1961-1962 he was a Samuel Fels Fellow.

LAWRENCE KOHLBERG, born in 1927, is Assistant Professor in the departments of Psychology and Human Development at the University of Chicago. He was, in 1961-1962, a Fellow at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences at Palo Alto. His most recent publications include "The Development of Children's Conceptions of a Moral Order" (*Vita Humana,* 1963) and "Moral Development and Identification" (National Society for the Study of Education *Yearbook,* 1963).

SIMON O. LESSER, born in 1908, is Visiting Lecturer at the University of Massachusetts. In addition to teaching at New York University and City College, he has studied at the Chicago and New York Psychoanalytic Institutes and The Washington School of Psychiatry. His numerous publications include articles in *The American Scholar, The Nation, Partisan Review, Psychiatry,* and others. His book, *Fiction and the Unconscious* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1957), is now a Vintage paperback.

HARRY LEVIN, born in 1912, is Irving Babbitt Professor of Comparative Literature and Senior Fellow in The Society of Fellows at Harvard University. He has also held distinguished visiting lectureships both in

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

this country and abroad. His extensive publications include many critical articles and books. The most recent are *The Power of Blackness: Hawthorne, Poe, Melville; The Question of Hamlet;* and *The Gates of Horn: A Study of Five French Realists* (to be published in 1963).

DAVID LITTLEJOHN, born in 1937, is at present a Teaching Fellow in English at Harvard University. In 1963, he will be Assistant Professor of English at the University of California in Berkeley. In addition to other reviewing, he has been a regular contributor to *Commonweal* and has published studies on Henry Miller and Lawrence Durrell in *The New Republic.*

ANDREW LYTLE, born in 1902, is editor of *The Sewanee Review.* He has held Guggenheim and Kenyon fellowships for fiction, and lectured extensively on creative writing. In addition to his contributions to anthologies, he has written five novels. His most recent works of fiction are *At The Moon's Inn, A Name For Evil, The Velvet Horn, A Novel, A Novella* and Four Stories.

THOMAS MOSER, born in 1923, is Associate Professor of English at Stanford. He is currently in England on an A.C.L.S. fellowship. His publications include *Joseph Conrad: Achievement and Decline,* and a critical edition of *Wuthering Heights.*

CLAIRE ROSENFIELD, born in 1930, is at present Instructor in English at Rutgers University, to which she will return in the autumn of 1964 as Assistant Professor. She will be in 1963-1964 a fellow at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences at Palo Alto. Her publications include critical articles in *Literature and Language,* and *The Minnesota Review.*

DAVID L. STEVENSON, born in 1910, is Professor of English and Coordinator of Graduate Studies at Western Reserve University. His publications include numerous critical articles on Renaissance literature in *E L H, The Shakespeare Quarterly,* and others; and on American fiction in such periodicals as *The Nation, The New Leader,* and *The New York Times* Book Review. He has also published *The Love-Game Comedy* (Columbia University Press) and edited with Herbert Gold *Stories of Modern America.*

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Issues of *DÆDALUS* in Print

These may be ordered from the *Dædalus* Subscription Office, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 280 Newton Street, Brookline Station, Boston 46, Massachusetts, postpaid. Back issues of *Dædalus* are priced at $1.75 each.

The American Reading Public (*Winter 1963*)

Contributors: Marshall A. Best, Leo Bogart, Reuben A. Brower, Benjamin DeMott, Jason Epstein, John Hollander, Dan Lacy, Henri Peyre, Leonard Shatzkin, Edward Shils, Roger W. Shugg, Thomas J. Wilson, and others.

American Foreign Policy—Freedoms and Restraints (*Fall 1962*)

Contributors: Raymond Aron, Lincoln P. Bloomfield, Bernard Brodie, Richard E. Caves, Herbert Feis, Stanley Hoffmann, Ernest R. May, John N. Plank, Roger Smith, Peter Paul Stender.

Current Work and Controversies—2 (*Summer 1962*)

Contributors: William Dray, Paul Friedrich, Edward Grant, David Hawkins, Richard Hofstadter, G. A. Kursanov, Seymour Slive, William P. Travis, Morton White, and others.

Science and Technology in Contemporary Society (*Spring 1962*)

Contributors: Raymond Aron, Eric Ashby, Gordon S. Brown, Gerald Holton, Aldous Huxley, Lawrence S. Kubie, W. Arthur Lewis, Frank E. Manuel, Robert S. Morison, Walter J. Ong.

Youth: Change and Challenge (*Winter 1962*)

Contributors: Bruno Bettelheim, Reuel Denney, S. N. Eisenstadt, Erik H. Erikson, Kenneth Keniston, Robert Jay Lifton, Kaspar D. Naegele, Talcott Parsons, George Sherman, Laurence Wylie.

Excellence and Leadership in a Democracy (*Fall 1961*)

Contributors: D. Wilfred Abse, James MacGregor Burns, Henry Steele Commager, John Conway, Lucie Jessner, David C. McClelland, Robert S. Morison, Henri Peyre, Don K. Price, Adam Yarmolinsky.

Evolution and Man's Progress (*Summer 1961*)

Contributors: Ralph W. Burhoe, James F. Crow, Hudson Hoagland, Hermann J. Muller, Henry A. Murray, Walter A. Rosenblith, Demitri B. Shimkin, B. F. Skinner, Julian H. Steward, and others.

Ethnic Groups in American Life (*Spring 1961*)

Contributors: Kenneth D. Benne, Joshua A. Fishman, Milton M. Gordon, Oscar Handlin, Peter H. and Alice S. Rossi, Ozzie G. Simmons, J. Milton Yinger, and others.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE FUTURE METROPOLIS (*Winter 1961*)

Contributors: Edward C. Banfield, Karl W. Deutsch, John Dyckman, Aaron Fleisher, Oscar Handlin, Gyorgy Kepes, Kevin Lynch, Martin Meyerson, Lloyd Rodwin, Raymond Vernon, Morton and Lucia White, and others.

THE RUSSIAN INTELLIGENTSIA (*Summer 1960*)

Contributors: David Burg, Boris Elkin, Leopold H. Haimson, Max Hayward, David Joravsky, Leopold Labedz, Martin Malia, Julián Marías, Richard Pipes, Leonard Schapiro, Benjamin Schwartz, Gustav Wetter, and others.

MASS CULTURE AND MASS MEDIA (*Spring 1960*)

Contributors: Hannah Arendt, James Baldwin, Ernest van den Haag, Oscar Handlin, H. Stuart Hughes, Stanley Edgar Hyman, Randall Jarrell, Leo Rosten, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., Edward Shils, Frank Stanton, James Johnson Sweeney, and others.

CURRENT WORK AND CONTROVERSIES—1 (*Summer 1959*)

Contributors: Solomon Barkin, John C. Bennett, P. W. Bridgman, Edith Cobb, John Dewey, René J. Dubos, A. Hunter Dupree, Hudson Hoagland, Seymour Martin Lipset, Lewis Mumford, Howard Simons, Sumner H. Slichter, John L. Thomas, and others.

MYTH AND MYTHMAKING (*Spring 1959*)

Contributors: Jerome S. Bruner, Joseph Campbell, Richard M. Dorson, Mircea Eliade, Clyde Kluckhohn, Harry Levin, Andrew Lytle, Marshall McLuhan, Henry A. Murray, Ernst Topitsch, Robert Lee Wolff, and others.

EDUCATION IN THE AGE OF SCIENCE (*Winter 1959*)

Contributors: Arthur Bestor, Douglas Bush, John L. Childs, Sidney Hook, Philippe LeCorbeiller, Margaret Mead, Hans J. Morgenthau, Ernest Nagel, Reinhold Niebuhr, David Riesman, George N. Shuster, and others.

ON EVIDENCE AND INFERENCE (*Fall 1958*)

Contributors: Raymond Aron, Martin Deutsch, Erik H. Erikson, Jacob Fine, Henry M. Hart, Jr., Paul F. Lazarsfeld, Daniel Lerner, John T. McNaughton, and others.

SYMBOLISM IN RELIGION AND LITERATURE (*Summer 1958*)

Contributors: Kenneth Burke, Werner Heisenberg, Talcott Parsons, I. A. Richards, Paul Tillich, Amos N. Wilder, and others.

THE AMERICAN NATIONAL STYLE (*Spring 1958*)

Contributors: Niels Bohr, P. W. Bridgman, Abraham Kaplan, George F. Kennan, Clyde Kluckhohn, Henry A. Murray, Linus Pauling, W. W. Rostow, Edward Teller.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Issues of *DÆDALUS* out of Print

See hard-cover books based on these issues, listed on following pages.

Arms Control (double issue, *Fall 1960*)

Contributors: A. Doak Barnett, Kenneth E. Boulding, Robert R. Bowie, Donald G. Brennan, Harrison Brown, Saville Davis, Paul M. Doty, Bernard T. Feld, William T. R. Fox, Erich Fromm, William R. Frye, Hubert H. Humphrey, Herman Kahn, Henry A. Kissinger, Arthur Larson, Ithiel de Sola Pool, Thomas C. Schelling, Louis B. Sohn, Edward Teller, Jerome B. Wiesner, Christopher Wright.

The Visual Arts Today (double issue, *Winter 1960*)

Contributors: James S. Ackerman, John E. Burchard, Maya Deren, Felix Deutsch, Robert Gardner, James J. Gibson, Sigfried Giedion, E. H. Gombrich, Boris Kaufman, Gyorgy Kepes, Le Corbusier, Margaret Mead, Paul Rand, W. J. H. Sandberg, Eduard F. Sekler, Andreas Speiser, Edward Steichen, Paul Weiss, Rudolf Wittkower, and others.

Quantity and Quality (*Fall 1959*)

Contributors: Karl W. Deutsch, Robert Frost, John G. Kemeny, Lawrence S. Kubie, Harold D. Lasswell, Wassily Leontief, Clarence Morris, Renato Poggioli, S. S. Stevens, Victor F. Weisskopf.

Science and the Modern World View (*Winter 1958*)

Contributors: P. W. Bridgman, Harcourt Brown, Jerome S. Bruner, Philipp Frank, Henry Guerlac, Howard Mumford Jones, Charles Morris, Robert Oppenheimer, Giorgio de Santillana, and others.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Books Published from Issues of *DÆDALUS*

Virtually all the issues of *Dædalus*, in expanded form, appear also as books in hard covers. Inquiries about these books should be directed to their respective publishers.

Youth: Change and Challenge, edited by Erik H. Erikson (based on the Winter 1962 issue of *Dædalus*), Basic Books (forthcoming).

Excellence and Leadership in a Democracy, edited by Stephen R. Graubard and Gerald Holton (based on the Fall 1961 issue of *Dædalus*), Columbia University Press, 1962. $5.00

Evolution and Man's Progress, edited by Hudson Hoagland and Ralph W. Burhoe (based on the Summer 1961 issue of *Dædalus*), Columbia University Press, 1962. $4.50

The Future Metropolis, edited by Lloyd Rodwin (based on the Winter 1961 issue of *Dædalus*), George Braziller, Inc., 1961. $5.00

Arms Control, Disarmament, and National Security, edited by Donald G. Brennan (based on the Fall 1960 issue of *Dædalus*), George Braziller, Inc., 1961. $6.00

The Russian Intelligentsia, edited by Richard Pipes (based on the Summer 1960 issue of *Dædalus*), Columbia University Press, 1961. $4.50

Culture for the Millions? edited by Norman Jacobs (based on the Spring 1960 issue of *Dædalus*), D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc., 1961. $4.95

The Visual Arts Today, edited by Gyorgy Kepes (based on the Winter 1960 issue of *Dædalus*), Wesleyan University Press, 1960. $8.50

Quantity and Quality, edited by Daniel Lerner (based on the Fall 1959 issue of *Dædalus*), The Free Press of Glencoe, Inc., 1961. $4.50

continued

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

MYTH AND MYTHMAKING, edited by Henry A. Murray (based on the Spring 1959 issue of *Dædalus*), George Braziller, Inc., 1960. $6.00

EDUCATION IN THE AGE OF SCIENCE, edited by Brand Blanshard (based on the Winter 1959 issue of *Dædalus*), Basic Books, 1959. $4.50

EVIDENCE AND INFERENCE, edited by Daniel Lerner (based on the Fall 1958 issue of *Dædalus*), The Free Press of Glencoe, 1959. $4.00

SYMBOLISM IN RELIGION AND LITERATURE, edited by Rollo May (based on the Summer 1958 issue of *Dædalus*), George Braziller, Inc., 1960. $5.00

THE AMERICAN STYLE, edited by Elting E. Morison (containing material published in the Spring 1958 issue of *Dædalus*), Harper and Brothers, 1958. $5.00

SCIENCE AND THE MODERN MIND, edited by Gerald Holton (based on the Winter 1958 issue of *Dædalus*), Beacon Press, 1958. $3.95

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED